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SATURDAY'S CHILD

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

The child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is blithe and bonny and good and gay.
Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace;
Wednesday's child is merry and glad,
Thursday's child is sour and sad;
Friday's child is loving and giving,
And Saturday's child must work for a living.

AT the top of the trail they paused for a moment, and Judy's alert blue eyes passed from point to point of the familiar scene—the pale outlines of distant peaks, with a bloom as of grapes on their gaunt sides encircling the tumbling masses of nearer mountains, sharp and broken and unmarked by any sign of human life. Below were the pointed tips of redwoods, crowded thick in a winding cañon, and about them stretched brown slopes, crisped by drought, sending up aromatic odors of sage and everlasting under the brilliant California sun.

Meldrum, reining up his horse a pace or two behind, looked at Judy, at the childish line of her brown cheek and the determined chin, at the strong, boyish figure in shirt, knickerbockers and leggings, seated with a boy's ease on the clumsy Mexican saddle. Then he, too, lifted his eyes to the rolling world of naked mountains before them, piled in a chaotic lavishness that made the Creation seem very near and vivid. The land here had not passed beyond "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Meldrum pushed back his sombrero from his hot forehead.

"And yet you can leave this, Judy!" he said.

She smiled gravely. "Oh, I'll come back to it some day," she said, half in

apology. "You see, I have had this always, while the other—well, I must try it, you know. Everything I want now is—over there." And she nodded toward the east. Judy always knew the points of the compass.

Meldrum started his horse down the steep trail, leaving her to follow. She let her whip fall in friendly fashion on his broad shoulder.

"You know, Johnny, it's not pleasant, leaving you, and all that," she said, as awkwardly as a boy. "You have been such a good old playmate—I am going to miss you like everything. But I must try it."

"I wish you needn't!" he exclaimed. "Somehow, the idea of your going off alone with no weapon but a play in your pocket—you don't know how hard it has been not to go to your mother and tell her what I thought."

"I know you don't believe in the play," said Judy, soberly. "Perhaps you are right; perhaps it's no good at all. But I've got to find it out for myself." She straightened in the saddle and threw back her shoulders. "If that isn't good, I'll do another," she said. "I'm not afraid."

"You don't know enough to be—that's what's the matter with you," said Meldrum, irritably. Then he reined up abruptly and, swinging himself to the ground, stooped intently over some discovery in the soft dust of the trail. Instantly he was all woodsman, frowning, judicious, absorbed. Judy, leaning on her high pommel, might have been one of the boulders that jutted out of the harsh soil, for all the recognition he showed of her pres-

ence. She smiled to herself, remembering certain other girls who had tried to ride or walk with Meldrum, and had come back with hurt feelings. Judy, being frankly unsentimental, could forgive an impersonal attitude, and was rather more comfortable when treated as a comrade than when it was forced upon her that she was an attractive young woman. Once Meldrum, in an unwonted mood of gaiety, had begun a note to her with, "Dear old chap." No term from all the category of admiration could have pleased her so much. She waited now in companionable silence until he lifted his head and motioned to her to dismount; then she slipped down and stooped beside him, the bridle over one arm.

"What tracks are those—?" he began.

"Deer," said Judy, promptly.

"How many?"

She studied the marks closely before answering. Meldrum was severe on a mistake.

"Three," she finally decided.

He nodded approval.

"Probably a buck and two does," she added.

"Why?"

"Well, one makes a larger, deeper track and goes with a longer stride."

"Why not a doe with two fawns?"

Judy bent closer over the trail. "No; they are too big," she asserted.

Meldrum rose, dusting his knee with his sombrero. "Good girl," he commented. "You do me credit, Judy."

She smiled under the praise, and scrambled back into the saddle unaided. The trail wound sharply down now, and presently dived into another region, a green twilight of towering redwoods, still and odorous and faintly chilly, even at this hour. The church-like hush was broken only by the rush of a splendid little brook and the occasional call of a bird. Even the feet of the horses were noiseless on the soft ground, padded by centuries of droppings from the giants overhead. It was a place to stir the senses, to clear away all that crowds the surface of life, leaving only its few big meanings plain. What had appeared complex

became suddenly simple in this massive solitude. Love and work—what else was there, after all?

Meldrum drew a deep breath, and turned his face to Judy, his eyes quick with some new purpose. She rode with her hand on her hip, looking about with alert interest. A bluebird scolded at them and she laughed, calling back an insult in his own tones.

"Jolly in here, isn't it?" she said. "I am getting awfully hungry, myself. When shall we lunch?"

Meldrum did not answer—another little way of his that had enraged other girls. Judy waited philosophically till his attention should return to her, and presently began to whistle. In their rides he had taught her to notice the different bird notes, and out of them she had made an informal symphony, a score of varying calls woven together with the brief song of the meadowlark, and ending in a sweet, high, jubilant trill that was a Spring ecstasy. With the last note she rose in her stirrups and threw her arms out wide.

"Oh, I could burst with it all—the sense of what is coming, and what I can and will do!" she exclaimed. "I must have the power—what else could make me feel like this, all alive, and bloodthirsty to try?"

"Youth," said Meldrum.

"Youth!" she repeated, impatiently. "Sometimes, Johnny, you make me very tired!"

"I know; I wish I didn't," he said, apologetically. "But so many people mix up hope and talent! They want to sing for their supper, and instead they have to split kindling for it. I don't want you—splitting kindling in New York."

Judy sighed. "You are so old and wise! Do be young with me just this one day. Let's believe everything we want to—and, oh, do let's eat!"

She slipped out of the saddle and threw herself face down for a drink from the brook. A moment later she scrambled up laughing, with wet cheeks, and searched her various pockets for a handkerchief. Meldrum drew

out his own and gravely dried her face. Then he bent down and kissed her.

She started back, looking more amazed than anything. Meldrum himself looked almost as surprised.

"Johnny," she said, after a pause, "that didn't happen."

"Yes, it did," he answered, doggedly.

"Then I shall have to go home." And she turned toward her horse.

A little smile came into Meldrum's eyes. "You said that we should be young and believe what we wanted," he suggested. "Can you stay if I apologize? I won't say I am sorry, but if begging your pardon——"

Judy dropped down on a log and began to laugh.

"I can't be haughty in these clothes!" she said, looking ruefully at her knickerbockers. "Never mind, we'll forget it. All the same, Johnny," growing serious again, "it wasn't square of you, and I don't like it."

"Forgive me, dear old chap!" And he held out his hand. There was still a lurking triumph in his eyes, but she decided to ignore it.

When they had lunched, Judy dropped back luxuriously on the cushioned earth with her arms under her head. Her eyes rested with friendly appreciation on Johnny's strong frame, big and yet graceful, his square-cut, serious features, the humanizing cleft in his chin that mitigated the line between his eyes. They were keen, observant eyes, capable of severity, but the deep kindness about his mouth betrayed him. One would know at a glance that Johnny loved animals and little children, and was slightly impatient of the average young woman. He was now clearing away the remains of their luncheon, scrupulously burying all signs of rubbish. He had always attended to every detail of their trips himself, without fuss or words. Judy had only to set out, care-free; there would be food when it was needed, she would find herself taken care of at every point. There was no gallantry in this—he would let her mount and dis-

mount unaided, and he scolded her roundly for any mismanagement of her horse; yet she found it wholly satisfying. Judy was not an average young woman.

"You are a good provider, Johnny," she said, when he had washed the telescope silver drinking-cup in the brook and folded it into its case.

"What good will that do you, off in New York?" he asked, throwing himself face down a few feet away. "Judy, I don't like to ask you questions, you're such a reserved little cuss"—they smiled at each other—"but, honestly, are you taking plenty of money?"

"Yes, plenty, truly; enough for several weeks there. Mother grew reckless when she realized that it was the last time."

He lifted his head quickly. "The last time?"

She nodded. A hard look had come into her eyes.

"If I don't succeed in this, I am going to earn my own living, teaching the kids in the valley school. They will give me a position."

"But, my dear girl, why? You surely haven't lost——"

"Oh, no! And I suppose my father meant the money for me as well as for my mother—what there is. But I can't stand it any longer." She sat up abruptly. "What's the use of pretending? You know how it is at home—a fight over every dollar that is spent. I can't put up with it any longer. Everything I have ever done or had in my life has been spoiled by a struggle first." She spoke rapidly, with the relief of letting it all out for the first time. "We have a beautiful old place, and plenty to eat, and my mother thinks it is foolish to want anything else that costs money. She never took me anywhere in her life. I have had to do it all alone, or stay here till I died. She didn't send me to school in San Francisco—I sent myself, and I had to fight for it. I have been all about the state by myself, and that is why I'm not afraid of going to New York alone. I have run myself since I was ten years

old. And it is all this that has made me reserved—a reserved little cuss,” she broke off, with a smile. “There, I have given you the story of my life! Now let’s forget about it. But I wanted you to understand that I just had to go. Wouldn’t you try any experiment if the alternative was teaching the valley kids?”

“There is always another alternative.” John spoke hesitatingly, his eyes on the ground between his elbows. “If you were to marry——”

“Ugh!” she interrupted, briskly, “that would be worse yet. No marrying for me—I’d hate it. Oh, I want to be free,” she spread her arms out wide; “I want to stretch my wings; I want to go head first into the world!”

John’s forehead dropped down on his arm. “I suppose you’ve got to go,” he said, presently. “One thing, Judy: if you ran short of money, you would let your mother know, wouldn’t you? You would write——?”

“I’d starve first,” was the curt answer.

“But, my dear girl! Pride is all very well——”

“I shall never ask my mother for money again as long as I live. And you wouldn’t either, in my place.”

“Then would you ask me?”

She laughed. “Perhaps! But I sha’n’t need it. I tell you, I am going to make my fortune.”

“Well, good luck, old chap!” He rolled on his side and held out his hand to her with a smile.

“You’re a good sort, Johnny,” she answered, with a sturdy brown hand in his.

Toward sunset they remounted and rode out of the odorous green twilight and up the wide slope of shining brown grass, the bare mountains about them showing gold and purple and blue-black in the changing light. At the top of the trail they paused to look back on the pointed tips of the redwoods in the cañon below. A meadowlark flung his sudden song up to them. Judy answered and broke into her own bird symphony, a fine, sweet little thread of melody, plaintive for all its joyous-

ness. Meldrum laid his hand on her horse’s back.

“Judy,” he said, “is there nothing that can keep you—nothing you hate to leave—nothing you want here?”

She looked gravely off to the east and shook her head.

“No; everything is—there.”

II

THE rehearsal was going badly at the Columbian that morning. Miss Barron was “in a mood,” and the manager had wisely turned his attention to drilling a band of supers at one side of the stage, leaving her to rehearse herself. His patient voice came to them at intervals: “For God’s sake, boys, use your intelligence!”

Miss Barron’s mood was not a temper—such a thing was unknown to her joyous philosophy; but she chose to see everything in a spirit of caricature that day, and the cast was helpless with laughter. Two young fellows just out of the dramatic school, acting very hard and oh, so seriously! looked on with amazed disapproval, and Eveleth finally dropped his eye-glass with a bored sigh.

“My dear Rose, I should like to go home some time to-day, you know,” he said, his English inflections emphasized by disapproval.

“Why, certainly—now, if you like,” said Rose, generously. “I don’t really see what this play needs of a leading man, anyway.”

“Ah, but the leading man has great need of this play,” said Eveleth, imperturbably. “Now, will you go through this last scene properly, or will you not?”

“Oh, very well, then!” And for an hour or two real work was done, the manager returning to his post at the prompter’s table as unobtrusively as possible, lest he should, in his own phrase, “set her off again.” When she was at last released, she dropped down on a chair in the wings and Eveleth joined her with milk and sandwiches from the general supply. The

sight of him, long, lean, faded, immaculate, drinking out of a milk-bottle, always amused Rose.

"It ought to be absinthe; nothing else would suit your gently critical air," she said, biting into a sandwich with frank and joyous appetite.

"Indeed, I much prefer milk," he protested, indolently.

She drew an awestruck breath. "What a wicked life you must have led—to have come out at milk already!" she exclaimed.

He was looking at her abstractedly, at her splendid bigness, the vivid brown eyes, the beautiful, generous, careless mouth.

"Oh, I have not been especially wicked," he said, finally. "I have wanted to, of course, but all the vice I could find seemed to me—oh, rather nasty and messy, don't you know. If I could find a new kind, that was not banal or vulgar or a frightful bore, I should enjoy being a devil."

"You want a nice, refined vice, suited to artistic sensibilities," she suggested. "Now, I find the world full of fascinating temptations, myself."

"Indeed?" He drew his chair closer. "This begins to be interesting."

"It is—deeply. For instance, I should love to have five more sandwiches and another bottle of milk—oh, if I ever dared eat all I wanted! Why shouldn't I grow fat, if I choose! But they won't let me." She pushed the provisions away. "Take them out of my reach, Evvy."

When he came back she was reluctantly unfolding a type-written manuscript.

"Such a dear little girl brought me this play to read," she explained. "She wrote it herself in the wilds of California, and came here all alone to sell it, poor lamb!"

"Of course it is no good," Eveleth asserted.

"Of course—perfectly hopeless; but I had to look at it, she had such nice blue eyes. It was written especially for me—imagine!"

"Where did she ever see you?"

"In San Francisco, two years ago. She is coming here this afternoon for an answer, so I must wade through the rest of the thing. Oh, it is clever, in a way; she has ideas. With ten years' work and experience she might turn out something actable, though it isn't likely."

"Shall you tell her that?"

"Oh, Evvy! Break her heart? What do you take me for? She has the dearest little way about her—something gallant and boyish, and she looks straight at you, and she's scared perfectly stiff, but she'd die before she'd show it. I couldn't hurt her."

Eveleth looked faintly amused. "I suppose she thinks you are the most wonderful being on earth—a dazzling fairy princess, to be approached with trembling of the knees and stammering of the tongue," he commented.

"And so I am," said Rose. "Go away now, and let me finish this thing. Of course, she has seven-minute asides for every character, poor baby!"

Judy's name was brought in during a brief lull in the afternoon's work. Rose hospitably carried two chairs to a secluded corner and shook her head at Eveleth, who was leaning against the wall a few feet away.

"Go away, Evvy; you will embarrass her."

He screwed in his single eye-glass and folded his arms across his chest. "Oh, she won't mind anything as foolish as I—look," he said, lazily.

Judy came in bravely, very serious and businesslike, with only a red spot on either cheek to betray her. All her dreams for the past two years had centered about this moment—when she should be admitted to the star's presence to learn the fate of her play. In her dreams, the star had invariably accepted the play, with high praise; but the actual moment brought a depressing conviction that no ignorant girl from the West could possibly do work worthy of attention. The feeling had been coming all the week while she waited for the verdict, wandering about the streets and learning to find her way with the same sturdy

self-reliance that had guided her through the home woods. The overwhelming rush of the streets, the men who stared or even, once or twice, spoke, did not frighten her in the least; but when the stage door closed behind her and she waited in the narrow paved alley for her summons, her knees shook and her jaw trembled and her heart went in great, heavy thumps till she felt she must run away or scream in sheer terror. Then a boy came to guide her in, and she clutched her courage in both hands as she followed him up and down steps and past jagged canvases that stood for foliage, to the big, bare stage.

Rose met her with both hands outstretched, her brown eyes shining with the kindly gaiety that was so easy to them.

"So here is my friend from California—" she began.

Judy smiled brightly, but her tongue felt so thick she did not dare try to shape definite words.

"Sit down here and talk about your play," Rose went on. "It is very clever, you know—really remarkable for a first attempt. Of course, I am not going to take it—I should begin by abusing it instead of praising it, if I were. But I want you to tell me how you got the idea, and all about it."

The shock came so gently under the warm flattery of Rose's smiling eyes that Judy scarcely noticed it. She had come nerved for rejection, but, somehow, this scarcely felt like it. She was beguiled into an answering smile.

"Tell me where it is bad; I'd much rather talk about that," she said.

Rose turned over the manuscript and reflected judicially. "Well, then, here is the serious defect," she said. "You have written your play for a star, and yet you don't bring her on at all in the first act. Now, no right-minded star on full salary"—she smiled humorously—"is going to put up with that!"

The criticism was accepted so eagerly that Rose, out of her easy kindness, was moved to offer others, and Judy's fright vanished under the consciousness that her play was being taken

seriously. The stage-manager's voice finally broke in on them:

"Third act once more, if you please, Miss Barron."

Judy started up guiltily. "I ought not to have stayed so long—but you were so good!" she exclaimed. "Some day, if I should do this all over, will you look at it again?"

"Gladly," Rose promised. "Come and see me some Sunday afternoon—nice girl! I am always at home then." She pressed Judy's hands, and sent her away, smiling happily, with her rejected play clasped exultantly like a weapon; then she turned back to Eveleth.

"Isn't little California a duck?" she demanded.

"But you encouraged her shamelessly," he protested. "The poor girl will spend weeks doing that stuff all over again. Why didn't you send her back to her mother?"

"Oh, how could I?" she exclaimed, reproachfully. "You are such a cold-blooded brute! I had to make her happy. You don't think I was horrid, do you? Please, Evvy!" The brown eyes showed an intensity of pleading suggestive of tears; how far it was playing-acting no man could tell.

Eveleth abandoned his point without a protest. "You are always a dear and a sweet," he said.

"Please, Miss Barron, that was your cue," said the stage-manager, wearily.

III

JUDY flew back to her boarding-house and fell upon her manuscript, eager to use her new knowledge; but, as she read, her enthusiasm faded, and a dissatisfied frown clouded her eyes. The play seemed to her, all at once, poor and weak, especially for such a creature as Rose Barron. Presently she pushed it from her and sat with her hands clasping her knee, staring into the growing dusk. An hour passed but she did not move. At the summons to dinner she went down mechanically, but was scarcely conscious she had

done so until she found herself mounting the stairs afterward. Lighting the gas, she found paper and pencil and began to make notes, scribbling eagerly, with long pauses between. It was twelve o'clock before she threw down the pad, with a little laugh and a stretch of weariness.

A new play had been blocked out, in all the fullness of its four acts, a drama of love and action beside which the first was as a kindergarten piece. To be sure, there were problems yet to be met—a crime to which a motive must be fitted, a splendid sacrifice that still lacked an object; but these were details that could be grappled with later. Now she had to face practical difficulties. The money for the trip had been given grudgingly, with many sighing prophecies; no more could be asked for, that was settled. Judy's mouth took on a set line at the idea, and her eyes hardened. She had enough for two weeks more in her comfortable boarding-house and her trip home. But plays were not written in two weeks. She faced it with a growing smile of daring and excitement.

"Oh, be a sport!" she exclaimed, suddenly, bringing her fist down hard on her knee.

Two days later Judy was established in a small back room, sunless and dingy, in a sunless and dingy block. Her formal meals she took at a neighboring dairy restaurant; the informal ones she carried up the three flights and ate at her work-table, holding a small kettle over the gas, when hot water was necessary, till her arm cracked with stiffness. She had never been so happy in her life.

"Living in New York is much cheaper than we thought," she wrote her mother. "I shall probably stay several weeks more. Miss Barron has encouraged me a good deal, but there is nothing definite yet. Give my love to Johnny, if you ever see him, and tell him I am too busy to write to him."

Two Sundays went by before Judy found courage to send her card up to Rose's apartment. Rose, who was making tea for half-a-dozen callers,

studied the name in puzzled hesitation.

"Now, who can that be?" she finally demanded of Eveleth.

"Why, wasn't that the one with the play, the——?"

"Oh, of course!" Rose exclaimed. "Show her up; she's a nice girl."

"Too bad to show up a nice girl," protested a young woman in a blue tulle hat, with an air of pensive reminiscence. There was more laughter than the remark seemed to warrant.

"Polly, you are the worst!" said Rose, drying her eyes. Then she opened the door to Judy and stretched out both hands. "Well, little California! I thought you had wholly forgotten me and were never coming. Mr. Eveleth has been here every Sunday, just in the hope of meeting you—here she is at last, Evvy. Polly, you ought to know Miss Kent, though I am not at all sure that she ought to know you!"

Nothing could have been more pink and round and guileless than the face under the blue tulle hat, lifted protestingly to Judy.

"Isn't she the jealous cat!" exclaimed the young woman. "You've heard of this professional jealousy, my dear—well, now you see it. It's my blue tulle hat. Rose doesn't mind my acting, but my hats get her crazy. She spent ten minutes trying to persuade me to 'take it off and be more comfortable'; but I was on. Now, would you take off a blue tulle hat, if you looked as sweet as this in it?"

"Never—I'd sleep in it!" said Judy, finding herself unexpectedly courageous. The ready laughter that followed set her pulses dancing.

"Going over to the enemy—I like that!" Rose complained. "Never you mind, little California; the next time you want a play read, you'll see!"

"Oh, does she write plays?" cried Polly, with pleasing excitement.

"Indeed she does, and very good ones," Rose asserted; then she laughed at Judy's blush, putting a white finger in the middle of it. "We mustn't embarrass her. Now, this is Mr. Simeon Knowles—no, the plump one with the

chocolate cake; that is Lord Merrington on the couch, and the lady in the corner with the Egyptian eyes and all the cushions is Mrs. Froley—she was Belle Maurice once, but she is only Mrs. Herbert Froley now.”

“More fool she,” sighed the lady referred to, who was curled among the cushions like a frivolous Cleopatra, her eyes clinging downingly to the impassive British profile beside her.

“Now, Belle, you know you wouldn’t come back if you could,” Rose protested. “You have everything on earth that——”

“My dear, you never were married,” broke in Mrs. Froley. Her voice had a plaintive note that might have been trying in one less exquisitely pretty. “Believe me, there is nothing in life so delightful as a lover—or so unpleasant as a husband. You think, when you marry, you are merely going to domesticate your sweetheart, but it is nothing of the kind—you exchange him for a totally different creature.”

“They’re mean things,” put in Simeon Knowles, a plump, boyish-looking man, with eyes like expressive currants, who might have been twenty but was probably nearer forty. Mrs. Froley’s voice rose a key with the acuteness of her grievance.

“Why, before I was married, if I so much as bruised my little finger, Herbert was in anguish; it was, ‘My God, you might have been killed!’ Now when I almost break my neck, he says, ‘How exactly like you!’ and goes on with his paper. Oh, you can laugh! But you are being petted every night of the season, Rose Barron, while I never get a hand for my performance.”

“Perhaps you don’t give a good show,” suggested Polly. Something in her brisk voice made Judy suspect that there was not much love lost between these two.

“Well, I have done *The Wife* in every known phase,” sighed Mrs. Froley. “I have been the happy little wife, and the mysterious, alluring wife, and the good-fellow wife, and the pathetic, patient wife, and the brilliant, cynical wife—but, believe me, all a man wants

of a wife is that she should let him alone. It’s all a frightful sell. Give me the good old clapping public, every time.”

“Sometimes they don’t clap,” said Polly. “I’ve seen nights when they wanted me to let ’em alone, I can tell you. And if they get tired of you, there’s no alimony in it.”

“She’s a thrifty little soul,” commented Rose. “They haven’t an atom of sentiment, have they, Miss Kent? You and I know a great deal better.”

Judy smiled. It all seemed very brilliant and worldly to her.

“I’ve got sentiment, stacks of it,” protested Simeon Knowles. “And I dare say Merrington has, though he keeps on saying nothing.”

“Ah, well, I never talk, you know,” said Lord Merrington, seriously. “I leave that to you clever chaps.”

“But what do you do, then?” asked Polly, lifting her pink face to him with a childish naïveté that made Mrs. Froley’s Egyptian eyes narrow viciously. “One must do something at a party, mustn’t one?”

“Do?” Lord Merrington looked puzzled. “Why, I fancy I just—come, you know.”

“And what more could anyone ask?” murmured Mrs. Froley, letting a slender hand fall upcurled between them on the couch.

“You are very good, I’m sure,” said the Englishman, placidly. Polly shot a swift glance at Simeon Knowles; it might almost have been called a wink. There was mischief in the air, but Rose interposed.

“Polly, come and make fresh tea,” she said. “You do it so much better than I, and little California wants another cup. Evvy, take her over by that small table and make a good impression for the rest of us. Mr. Eveleth is our best foot, Miss Kent; we always put him forward.”

Judy took the indicated seat, though she would have preferred to stay beside Rose. This man with the worn, colorless face and English inflections rather appalled her. His eyelids fell half across his expressionless, light-gray

eyes as though to hold them up were too much trouble, his thin hair, prematurely gray, had a conceited curl, his dress and manner seemed to her affected; he had not shaken her hand, but had held it lifelessly for a moment, then let it slide away, an unpardonable offense to Judy's sturdy spirit. She was on the verge of active dislike when she looked up and met his smile—a smile so full of humor and sweetness and kindly simplicity that she could have begged his pardon for her past stupidity in not recognizing him as delightful.

"How wonderful Miss Barron is," she said, a little breathlessly, fearing to be found out.

"We all are," he answered, gravely. "Even I—and especially you."

"I! Oh, no!" She smiled at him, brightly, in case he should be making fun of her. "I am only an ignorant country girl. I don't know anything—except California."

"But think of knowing California! We know only a few blocks of Broadway."

"But doesn't 'a few blocks of Broadway' cover about everything—everything really interesting?" she ventured.

He considered her for several moments before answering. "It does not; but what is the use of telling you so?" he said, finally. "No one in love ever listens."

Judy looked up, startled, a little indignant. "In love!" she repeated. He smiled at the vigor of her repudiation.

"With Broadway," he explained. "I know the symptoms—I had it once myself. Perhaps you are a little in love with Miss Barron as well," he added, amusedly, very much as he might have put out a long finger to poke a kitten. Judy resented the attitude; her direct blue eyes showed fight.

"So you know the symptoms there, too?" she said, coolly.

"Do I!" He glanced across the room where Rose was teaching Simeon Knowles to beg with a lump of sugar on his nose. "My dear young lady, I—do you mind if I smoke?—I know

them from a to z"; and he rolled a cigarette dexterously between thumb and middle finger. "Why not?" he added, as Judy kept an irritated silence.

"Oh, I told you I was ignorant of everything but California," she said, bluntly. "Out there we either feel things so much we can't talk about them, or else we don't feel them at all. I don't understand anything else."

He looked at her with impersonal kindness. "Don't try to," he said. "Believe me, you have far the best of it. That is why we like you so much," he added, with a sudden smile; "because you are far too good for us!"

"I don't understand that, either," said Judy; but she smiled back.

"Evvy, come and play," called Rose. "I'm going to sing."

He rose languidly. "My dear Rose! Bad news should be broken gently, not flung at one's head."

"Look out, or I'll play my own accompaniment."

"Now, heaven forbid!" He seated himself at the piano and began to play with unexpected ease and brilliance. "What is it you feel impelled to sing?" he asked, over his shoulder. "If it is 'Violets' or 'The Rosary,' I shall go home at once."

"Then it is," said Rose; and they smiled at each other in a way that made Judy realize that she was, after all, only an outsider. A dim jealousy startled her with its quick pang. "I am nothing to them. Why should I stay?" she thought, impatiently.

"Little California is going to sing, too," said Rose, laying a hand on her shoulder; and the depression vanished like a mist.

Her cheeks were throbbing with excitement when she climbed her dingy stairs, an hour later.

"They like me, and they want to know me!" was her wondering thought.

IV

JUDY threw down her pencil and faced the problem squarely. The money for two weeks had done the work

of five, but now, in spite of dairy dinners and ten-cent breakfasts, it was gone. The trip home, figured down to its lowest point, was all that remained. Undoubtedly, the only course was for her to start home in the morning—with nothing to show for her faith in herself, nothing to appease her mother's injured sense of money thrown away, nothing to look forward to but days of dull grind in the valley school.

A vision of big, splendid Rose, rehearsing in the empty theatre or recklessly expending vitality on all comers in her apartment, made the life at home seem inexpressibly bald and colorless. Then Eveleth's face rose before her, listless, witty, kindly, lined with all experience, yet sweetened by the youngness of his smile. To Judy, fresh from elemental surroundings, he stood for all the glamour of the complex city world. And she had charm for him—that was the marvelous part of it. Her honest blue eyes and blunt answers had kept him beside her many an hour during the past weeks, even while he lazily admitted his infatuation for Rose. Her pulses gave a throb of excitement.

"Oh, I can't go!" she exclaimed, under her breath.

Yet if she stayed? One act finished and one half-done of a romantic drama did not offer a very firm foundation for a livelihood. She had told Rose nothing about the new play, dreading lest she should become a bore, and there was no chance for a real hearing now, for this was the last week of rehearsal, and Rose was working day and night. On Monday they were to open out of town, and it would be three weeks before they returned for the New York opening. Of course, if Rose was not going to like the play, it would be sheer folly to wait. And yet to go now—! With a puzzled sigh she went dejected through the October dusk to the theatre.

The door-keeper at the stage entrance nodded to her familiarly and she passed in unquestioned, with a thrill of elation that was severely hidden, even from herself. Judy did not

approve of being elated by worldly honors. Rose was rehearsing, going wearily through a love scene with her head on Eveleth's shoulder and a sandwich in her hand. She looked fagged and tired, but she smiled brightly at Judy as she rattled through a passionate appeal.

"I sob violently," she added, with a little wave of her sandwich, which she finished comfortably while Eveleth went through with his lines as punctiliously as though a first-night audience confronted them. When she was released she came and put her lips against Judy's cool cheek. Judy colored under the caress; Rose's easy kisses always filled her with wondering gratitude, though she could only ignore them with lowered eyes.

"You are such a refreshing young person," Rose said. "You always make me think of trout streams and west winds and clean, wholesome, outdoor things. I like to see you come into the theatre—it's a change of air."

"I'm afraid you won't see me much longer," said Judy, soberly. "I ought to be going home."

"Why, but you are our mascot!" Rose spoke with a wail of dismay. "You have to be here for the first night—you can't go back on us like that! Evvy, come and tell little California that she mustn't go home yet."

Eveleth strolled across to them. "If she goes, it will be over my dead body," he said, languidly. Then he smiled at her, persuasively. "You are not tired of us already?"

Tired of them! Judy's heart felt a sudden stab of pain. But her dumb shyness before sentiment kept her to a brief "No."

"And there is the coaching trip," Rose added. "We're going off for the day the Sunday after we get back, and you are to come."

"I have chosen to sit by you; you must come," Eveleth added, turning away.

Judy sighed desperately. "Oh, I can't go away!" she exclaimed. "I wonder—would you hate me—are you too tired to let me tell you about a new

play I'm trying—? Just to see if it is utterly worthless?"

"Of course! I'd love it. Come out here where we won't be interrupted." And Rose led the way into the great, dark auditorium, inhabited only by a sweeping-woman and a strolling cat, and uncovered a couple of seats for them as far from the stage as possible. "Don't mind if I close my eyes," she added. "They're tired."

So Judy breathlessly set forth her plot, with illuminating bits of dialogue and stage business. Rose seemed intensely interested; at least, she sat perfectly still, with closed eyes, and offered no interruptions.

"Is it any good at all? Would you go on with it?" Judy finished, striving to speak with dispassionate coolness.

Rose opened her eyes with a slight start. "Why, it's most interesting! I don't see how you ever worked it out all by yourself," she said. "You are the child wonder of the Pacific Coast!"

"And you think it's better than the other?"

"Why, yes—yes, I should say it was much better," Rose decided, after a guilty pause.

"I am sure it is, too. There's more action. And you will look at it when it is done?"

Rose glanced remorsefully at the flushed cheeks and unsuspecting eyes. "Indeed I will, dear child. Bring it to me whenever you like—after the first night here. You aren't really going to leave us, are you?"

"Of course not," said Judy.

It was after six when she left the theatre, and the cool dark was starred with lights, orange and violet. All about was the bewildering crash and roar of a cityful of people going home for the night. The cars jolted past with black, swarming masses of humanity spilling over the platforms. Judy eyed them with amusement as she turned down-town.

"How Johnny would hate them!" she thought.

"May I walk home with you?" Eveleth's voice startled her back from a sudden vision of a mountain

trail and a stalwart horseman in sombrero and leggings. She turned to him with a certain relief.

"But I am not going home," she said. "This is the hour when I get my dinner; it doesn't grow under the same roof with me."

"Neither does mine, and I shall have to take it all alone," he suggested, with a sidelong glance at her.

"Yes, I am afraid you will," she said, demurely.

"You wouldn't dine with me, just this once? I know a very good little place near here—quiet and all that. Would it bore you?"

She smiled. *Bore* her!

"It wouldn't do," she said, regretfully. "Don't you know it wouldn't, yourself?"

"Well, not with some fellows," he admitted. "But I should take good care of you, you know. And you haven't any people here to be shocked."

"That is just it; it puts the responsibility on me, don't you see? If they were here, to be shocked and amazed, why——"

"Why——?"

"Well, it would have been fun!" she admitted. "You understand, don't you?"

"I understand that you are a very nice girl," he answered, looking down at the sweet, honest mouth and firm chin and the childish line of her cheek. "But what if I were—quite by accident—to get my dinner where you get yours? Could anyone object to that?" The contrast of his elaborate, hypercivilized personality to the noisy, slap-dash dairy with its marble-topped tables and cups a half-inch thick, brought an irrepressible laugh.

"How you would loathe it!" she said. "Rice and milk, ten cents; chocolate eclair, five cents—that will be my dinner. The girl who throws it at me will punch fifteen cents on a ticket and pay no further attention to me. Sometimes I take black coffee, but not very often, for that is five cents more."

If Eveleth was dismayed, he did not

show it. "I adore rice and milk," he said, gravely, "and I'd run a mile for a chocolate éclair." And he kept on persistently, though she stopped several times and suggested good night.

At the door of the restaurant Judy looked up to see him weaken, but he followed her composedly to her table in a corner. The place was, after all, clean and bright and not crowded. She pointed out to him the many expensive things he could order, but he insisted on having just what she did. When a bowl of milk was planted in front of him and a tight mold of rice slung down at one side, he screwed in his eye-glass and studied them with an intensity of puzzled interest that made Judy shake with suppressed laughter.

"It is delightful—but what do you do with it?" he asked.

"You put the rice into the milk, and sugar the unsubmerged portions, like this," she explained, as gravely as she could. "Then you eat it with a spoon, like this!" There was a struggle of rebellious dimples behind the clumsy spoon, and an answering light sprang into Eveleth's eyes. They laughed together joyously, and an odd glamour spread over the bald room as they ate their rice and milk. Their fellow-diners, dull, shabby, each eating stolidly alone with bent head and a general air of attending to an uninteresting duty, seemed miles remote from them, separated by some impalpable veil from their gay corner.

"Think of finding Arcady in the centre of town!" Eveleth finally exclaimed. "Baked apples—oh, we must have those! Eclairs are too mundane. And think of finding you—anywhere!" he added.

"We shall have to make it a coffee night," decided Judy. "Can you afford it?"

He felt anxiously in his pocket, then smiled relief. "Yes. Can you?"

"Just—if I walk all the way home."

"Is it very far?"

"Fully a block." That seemed pleasantly humorous to their mood.

"Are you going to ask me to call?"

"No."

"Oh! Well, to change the subject—but why not?"

"Because my apartment, though large and luxurious, is not adapted to callers."

"I see. Well, what shall we do, then?"

"I am going home to write letters; and you are going to your club for a good square meal, aren't you?"

"After all this! It would be a desecration to eat again to-night. Now for the coffee. How do you summon that proud young woman?"

"You say 'Hi!'"

"Hi!" repeated Eveleth, obediently.

"Two black coffees, please. Wouldn't 'I say!' have done as well?" he added.

"No; she comes Hi," said Judy, and kept a demure face under his reproachful stare.

"Little California, I didn't think that of you," he said, sadly.

"Then what did you think of me?" asked Judy, naïvely. A new wine seemed to be pouring through her veins. She could say things, look things, that she had never dreamed of before. A side of life that she had always shrugged away from, impatient or contemptuous, was suddenly revealed to her in a new light; she seemed to be looking into an enchanted country. Go back to California now! She laughed at the idea.

V

THE play did not progress very fast in the three weeks of Rose's absence, though Judy faithfully sat down to it every morning. A strange, rosy cloud seemed to have settled about her, wherein she reposed in contented blankness with absent eyes and smiling lips. She ate and slept very little and she scarcely thought at all. When she emerged she went out and stared at the shop windows or made frivolous purchases. The sunlight seemed spun sweetness, the chittering of the city sparrows was ecstatic melody. For the first time Judy felt a vague charm

in skirts and gloves and veils and all the feminine trappings that she had hitherto resented so hotly.

The fact that her money was going seldom troubled her. On the opening night she sent Rose a lavish box of flowers, and went in a shiver of excitement to the front-row seat that had been saved for her. Not knowing the ways of first-night houses, the play seemed to her an overwhelming triumph. Rose and Eveleth, called before the curtain, had smiling glances for her; then her big, beautiful Rose had to come out alone and laugh her thanks and gather up her flowers and even make a very small speech before they would let her go. And Judy's heart swelled with triumph till there were tears in her eyes; for she was in love with it all.

When the curtain fell on the final tableau, she edged her way through the departing crowd to a door back of the boxes that let her into her enchanted world. She had not seen Eveleth to speak to since that wonderful dairy dinner, over three weeks before, and something under her white blouse—a new white blouse of embroidered crêpe—pulsed and shivered and sang as she made her way sedately toward Rose's dressing-room.

Rose stood in the doorway with an excited group shaking her hands and patting her shoulders, all talking in shouts. A sudden shyness made Judy pause before they saw her, dismayed at her own unworthiness of the brilliant world that had opened to admit her. Then her pulses gave a start as she caught sight of Eveleth. He was leaning against a wall, apparently listening to a voluble little man who had button-holed him, though his eyes seemed to be more on Rose than on the speaker. His face, under the flaring gas, was hot and painted and tired. His listless voice, when he spoke, sounded thin and artificial. "That?" was Judy's startled thought. Was it for such a man as that that she had wandered into a fog of dreams? The rose cloud of the past weeks parted and rolled away, and her feet came smartly down

to earth. There was no pain in the shock—only amazement and a certain relief. She came briskly forward.

"Well, Rose of the World," she said, stretching out her hand over Mrs. Froley's spangled and jeweled shoulder.

Rose beamed welcome and drew her into the group. "Little California, I am glad to see you again!" she exclaimed. "So you liked us, did you? Come in while I get dressed. Belle, you may come, too, but the rest must run away." It was ten minutes before she succeeded in shutting the door on them. Then she turned to the grim, lanky colored woman who was waiting to dress her, putting her arms about the bony neck and burying her face.

"Now, Nance, do your worst; I can bear it," she said.

Nance accepted the caress stoically. "You done pretty good, Miss Rose; but you was better in New Haven," she said, firmly. "What you want to go skippin' through that love scene so fast for?"

Rose rocked gently back and forth, her face still hidden in the rigid shoulder. "You're right, Nance, you're always right," she lamented. "Go on—get it all out."

"Well, then, Miss Rose, you didn't listen good while that old gardener was tellin' you his troubles. Your eyes was sneakin' off to the boxes, and you was thinkin' how cute you looked in that white suit. Now, you know better'n that, honey!" Her voice softened a little. "Don't you, now? Wouldn't you have listened with all your heart and soul to anyone in such pow'ful trouble—specially when the story was goin' to mix up your lover presently?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" sighed Rose. Then she lifted her head with a laugh and a tightening of her arms. "You are so good for me, Nance! It's a wonder I don't hate you for it. But that is enough for to-night. You have got the praise all off me before it had time to soak in. Now, dress me quick, because we are all going to supper."

"You'd much better go to bed," was the severe answer.

"Don't bully me before Miss Kent; she isn't used to your harsh ways."

It amounted to an introduction, and Judy smiled with sudden liking at the severe, light-brown face, its features more like those of an Indian than a negro. Nance's return nod expressed a qualified approval.

"Nance has dressed me ever since I went on the stage—at the ripe age of seven," Rose added, "and she dressed my mother before me; and what she doesn't know about the profession isn't worth knowing!"

"But she never told on us," put in Mrs. Frole, listlessly; her voice was apt to be listless when there were no men present.

"No, I ain't never told," agreed Nance; "but it would have been mighty serious once or twice, if I'd gone delirious!" She was deftly putting Rose into her street dress, but she shot an occasional keen glance at Judy, who was looking on in amused silence as they talked. When they left the dressing-room she called Rose back on some pretext, and through the thin door Judy heard her ask:

"What's that li'l' girl doin' here, Miss Rose?"

"Why, that's a duck of a girl from California," Rose explained. "You'll love her, Nance."

"H'm! She ought to be home with her mama," was the brief answer. "That's the kind that gets hurt, honey; look out for her."

"Oh, she is all right," laughed Rose, and swept them out to her cab. There was a group on the sidewalk waiting to see Rose pass, and the murmured "There she is!" made Judy thrill with reflected glory. A shabby youth sprang to shut the cab door, flushing at Rose's smile of thanks, and they whirled gloriously away; but Judy's thoughts kept going back to Nance's words.

"Am I the kind that gets hurt? And why? How?" she wondered.

The supper was given by a stout young man whose smooth, pale face seemed to be half chin. "Prosperous broker" was written on every curve

of his suave personality. Judy felt a flash of resentment at his easy friendliness, suspecting that he had not troubled to catch her name, that they were all asked merely to humor Rose. "If he went to a supper in what he considers his own circle, he would be different—less friendly, but more interested," she decided, and felt a childish desire to tell this complacent Mr. Kellogg that they were all quite as good as he.

Neither she nor Eveleth took much part in the gaiety of the supper. He seemed abstracted, and there was something gone from what Rose called his "gently critical air." Judy wondered about him quite dispassionately, putting away the past three weeks as she might have closed the cover on a story. But under all her thoughts ran the uneasy question:

"What does it mean—the kind that gets hurt?"

VI

WITH her emancipation from dreams came a bad hour of financial reckoning for Judy. It left her frightened and depressed, bitterly conscious of having been a little fool. As a result, she fell furiously to work, and all that week, night as well as day, she wrestled with her play, the old enthusiasm springing up within her higher than ever. Surely it must mean talent, this glow of creation, this willingness to endure any hardship for the chance to achieve. The play must be good, when it lived so vividly before her eyes. And, oh, the joy of showing Johnny that it was not merely youth that fired her; that she was of the glorious company that sing for their supper, whose work was not labor! "Save in his own country and among his own people," she murmured over her growing manuscript.

It was a strenuous week for the company, as well; for the critics, while praising the acting, were hard on the play, and various changes had to be worked out and rehearsed. Judy heard nothing from Rose or Eveleth, except for a brief note about the coaching party.

Then came an Indian Summer day of soft haze and delicate warmth, a clatter of neat hoofs and the gay call of the horn, laughter and the smell of dead leaves, and Judy found herself floating through a russet-and-gold country, with Eveleth beside her and Rose in reckless spirits on the box, while Polly's round, rosy face smiled out on every one from an unnecessary amount of white chiffon veiling, and Mrs. Froley, more plaintive and more exquisite than ever, made the most of her Egyptian eyes for the impassive profile of Lord Merrington. Simeon Knowles was beside Polly, and the suave and prosperous Mr. Kellogg had the reins. Eveleth was peacefully silent, so Judy breathed in the Autumn beauty and listened to the others with amused eyes. There was mischief brewing behind Polly's white veil, and Simeon was evidently a party to it. Judy saw the whispered conference that preceded a realistic burst of indignation from Polly.

"Why, Simmy Knowles!" she exclaimed, to all appearances outraged beyond endurance. "That's the meanest thing I ever heard in my life! I never did anything of the sort!"

Simmy was equally indignant. "Oh, very well, if you say so. But I was there, and I am in the habit of believing my own eyes."

"Then I advise you to give up the habit," snapped Polly, drawing as far away from him as the seat permitted. Every one was interested by this time.

"Why, little children!" exclaimed Rose, from the box.

"Well, I don't care!" Polly's blue eyes were as round as buttons in her pink face. "I won't have such things said to me. If Simmy isn't gentleman enough—"

Mrs. Froley interposed, "Bit," as Judy quickly understood.

"Poor Simmy! I am sure he doesn't deserve all this," she said, softly. He turned to her eagerly. "I knew you'd stand by me, Mrs. Froley!" Her heavy eyes caressed him, and there was a glint of satisfaction in their depths, as of one who filches some-

thing, however unimportant, from the enemy.

"Always, dear Simmy," she murmured.

"You're always good to me." And Simmy deftly swung himself over in front of her. "Merrington, change places with me, will you, like a good fellow? I'm not wanted over there."

Lord Merrington, cheerful and impassive, rose at once. "Certainly, old chap," he agreed; and Simmy was in his place before Mrs. Froley could get her breath.

Rose turned hastily back to the horses. An angry gleam of comprehension smoldered in the Egyptian eyes.

"Will she get him back?" murmured Judy, who felt as if she had a front seat at a comedy.

"Trust Belle!" answered Eveleth. "You see, she really cares."

"For—for him?" Judy's freeborn Western lips found difficulty with the title.

"Oh, dear, no! but for his scalp. He is her pet conquest, just at present. She won't give him up lightly."

"And yet he hasn't seemed so very —conquered," Judy ventured.

"Oh, if you can keep one beside you with a grappling-iron, it counts as a conquest—here," said Eveleth. "I suppose, in California, men ford rivers and cross mountains for a smile from you, and you think nothing of it."

A sudden vision of a stalwart mountaineer who had ridden down twenty miles from a lumber camp to spend an hour with her, going back the same night when the moon rose, brought a shadow across Judy's eyes. She certainly had not thought of it then as a conquest; it was only good old Johnny. They had talked of fishing and hunting, he had played with her dog and she had petted his horse; then his hearty handshake, and he had ridden off down the moonlit road—not exciting, perhaps, but very much a man. The memory went through her like a keen pain, but she shrugged it away.

"I don't know anything about it," she said. "Conquests have never been much in my line."

He smiled at her, lazily. "Am I the first, then?" His tone awakened that little new devil within, with whom she had as yet barely become acquainted.

"How can I tell?" she said, demurely. "I don't know a conquest when I see it."

"Do you know it when you hear it?" Eveleth asked. "You have a quality, little California! You are as true as a fine boy, and as plucky, and yet—I am glad you're a girl, you know!"

"Sometimes I am glad of it, too," said Judy. The wine was beginning to steal through her veins again and the week of disillusion to seem unreal. He was only amusing himself, of course; but she could amuse herself, too.

He smiled at her with indulgent appreciation. "Have you found out yet why you are too good for us?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Of course not; for it isn't true."

"Ah, then you are still in love with Broadway. I thought a week ago, at the supper, that the glamour was wearing a little thin."

"No. It was just that I had things to think about."

"What were they?"

"Well, for one thing, I wondered what had happened to you in those three weeks on the road."

He turned quickly, almost sharply. "Who has been saying——?"

"No one has said anything," she interposed. "I just felt it."

"Oh! What was it you felt?" His tone was all friendliness again.

"I don't know. You were changed. It was a little——" she conquered her reserve with an effort. "Well, you see, when you went away we were old friends and I knew you very well indeed. And then, that night, I suddenly realized that you were a stranger, that I didn't know you at all."

"But now you know that that was a mistake, don't you?—that we are the best kind of friends and very intimate?" he asked, persuasively; but, after facing it honestly, she had to shake her head.

"No. I dare say you know me, but

I don't know you at all. Perhaps I never could. Don't you see——" she frowned earnestly over the explanation—"it is as though I could only count one, two, three, but you could use one-half and seven-eighths and all sorts of compound fractions. I can't keep up."

"Keep up! I should like to make it my life work to——" his eyes rested reflectively on the sweet and sturdy profile—"to prevent your ever learning fractions," he added, and they both laughed.

Rose's voice broke in on them. "Little California," she called, "how did you do it? Evvy hasn't been seen to laugh for a month."

"I don't know," said Judy, "but I think he was laughing at my arithmetic."

"Mine is just as funny—probably funnier; but I never thought of trying that," Rose complained. "I have tried everything else, haven't I, Evvy? But he has been beyond human aid—the polite blues, that never give you an honest chance to say, 'What on earth is the matter?'"

"Well, I should think he would have them," put in Polly. "By the way you cling to the centre of that stage, Rose Barron, one would think you were gummed there. Evvy is always being crowded into corners and speaking up stage—the house never gets a glimpse of his face. It's enough to make anyone blue."

"Well, I am a star," protested Rose. "What do you expect?"

"I didn't expect anything else," said Eveleth, gloomily. "I have been there before."

"Let's all cheer him up," suggested Simeon, emerging from his devotion to Mrs. Froley with obvious relief. "We will each do something to entertain him, and the one that makes him laugh loudest gets a prize."

"What?" asked Polly.

"Thrifty Polly! I don't know yet. Who will begin?"

"Oh, you and Polly do your German opera," suggested Mrs. Froley, with sudden interest.

Polly smiled shrewdly. "Ah, but that would mean changing seats again, and we are so comfortable!" with a side glance at Lord Merrington.

"I will do, 'I am dying, Egypt, dying,'" said Simeon, looking at Polly so expressively that she relented.

"Well, come over here and we will do opera—if Lord Merrington doesn't mind changing again!"

"Not at all, I'm sure," was the placidly cheerful answer.

"Evvy is smiling already," said Rose, innocently. "Follow it up quickly, children."

It was Judy who laughed hardest at the miniature vaudeville that followed. Rose contributed the "human 'cello," and Mrs. Froley gave a wicked imitation of "Rose in the third act."

"I have found out what is the matter with amateur performances," Judy exclaimed, drying her eyes. "They ought always to be done by professionals!"

"But then they would scarcely be amateur, would they?" suggested Simeon, in the tones of Lord Merrington, an imitation of which he alone was smilingly unconscious.

"Little California hasn't done anything," put in Rose, hastily. "Now don't protest. You can at least recite 'The Wreck of the Hesperus.'"

"Little California!" chorused the others, rhythmically.

Judy's eyes turned to the wooded landscape for inspiration. The cool air against her cheek, the smell of earth and leaves and the quick pad of the horses' feet brought a sudden flood of feeling—not homesickness, but home love. With her face turned from them she began to whistle her bird symphony, twittering, calling, weaving the ripple of the meadowlark in and out of the forest chorus and coming with a rush to the final trill of ecstasy. There was a shout of applause, a clamor of joyous excitement.

"She wins!" cried Rose.

"But I didn't make him laugh," Judy protested.

"No; but you almost made him cry,

and that is better yet," Rose insisted. "Doesn't she get it, Evvy?"

"She gets every good thing we can give her," he assented, as the coach turned into the drive of the Summer hotel where they were to lunch. "You have piped away all my troubles; they have gone and drowned themselves like the rats."

"And you are perfectly happy?" asked Judy, a little wistfully.

"More than tongue can tell," he answered, taking her hand to help her dismount.

She slipped her arm through Rose's as they went up the steps to the empty piazza. "What a heavenly time we have had!" she said, impetuously.

VII

THE hotel was nearly deserted. A few relics of the departed season huddled in corners and stared critically or enviously over their fancy-work as the coach load took possession of the big hall. Rose was recognized at once in a running whisper that spread from group to group, though she seemed entirely oblivious of the fact, or of anything but that she wanted her luncheon at once. There was a general scramble to serve her, and presently they were seated at a table in the empty dining-room, and a deep silence had fallen over them.

"It isn't a party just now, it's food," Rose apologized, with a long sigh of satisfaction. "Even Evvy is eating," she added, a few moments later. "Little California, you have made him human again. What shall the prize be?"

"Suppose we give her Evvy," suggested Polly, who had been fairly purring over her lamb chops and creamed potatoes.

"Oh, beautiful!" Rose shouted, with laughter. "Just the thing—Polly always hits it. Don't you think that's perfect, Evvy?"

Judy, sitting opposite him, winced without knowing why at something in his face, a look that was gone before

she could be sure it was not her imagination. An instant later he was smiling across at her with uplifted glass.

"What do you say, Miss Kent? May I be your prize?"

"If I deserve anything so munificent," she smiled back.

He looked about the table, his glass still raised. "Is there anyone here who can show just cause why I should not be this lady's prize?" His glance stopped at Rose; but she was laughing in a whole-souled way. "Then here's to us, Miss Kent!" And they drank together to seal the compact. As he put the glass down the shadow crossed his face again.

"Well, that did kill conversation," suggested Simeon, after another silence.

"Some conversations are better killed," said Mrs. Froley, drily; and Judy realized that her brief moment of importance had not endeared her to the lady of the Egyptian gaze. "As the chaperon of this party, I feel called on to ask when we start back?"

Rose leaned regretfully toward the open window beside her, thrusting one hand into the warm tide of sunlight that poured through it.

"I don't want to go back at all," she exclaimed.

"Well, why should you?" said Mr. Kellogg, promptly. "Why not stay overnight? There is no lack of accommodation here, and I will get us a private dining-room. Would it amuse you?" He had an air of putting the whole hotel at her disposal, and her vivid eyes widened joyously at the prospect.

"How beautiful! If that isn't exactly like you! Everybody! Did you hear?"

They echoed her enthusiasm, bursting into a babel of plans.

"Nance can come down on the train and bring us a bag full of things," Rose added. "Simmy, go and telephone her. She can stop at Belle's house if there aren't enough of mine."

"What sort of things?" asked Simeon, rising.

"Nance will know," was the severe answer.

"Oh, that kind! I thought maybe you wanted party gowns and blouses—blooses—whatever you call 'em," he apologized. "Don't let anyone swipe my salad, please. I'll tell Nance to provide for four."

Polly's lips opened to call something after him; then she abruptly closed them again, with a sharp sigh. Every one shouted with laughter.

"Why didn't you say it, Polly? Are you losing your nerve?" Rose asked.

Polly drew down discreet eyelids. "I think I'd better not," she admitted.

"Well, if Polly thinks that, for pity's sake don't urge her," murmured Mrs. Froley.

When they rose from the table, Mr. Kellogg went to make arrangements about rooms, and Eveleth followed Rose to the porch.

"That is a pleasing little lake down there," he suggested. "Come and let me row you about on it."

She protested lazily. "You—row! Don't be hypocritical, Evvy. You know very well you would lie back and smoke; and presently I should be doing the rowing."

"And think how delightful you would look, bending to the oars, your hair doing little damp curls on your forehead." He moved very close to her, and his hand fell over hers on the railing. "Come and play with me, Rose! You have neglected me frightfully since you acquired your friend Kellogg." She drew her hand carelessly away.

"I have to be nice to him to-day, Evvy—considering it is his coach."

"I am vastly more entertaining," he pleaded. "I can always make you laugh, and you know you love laughing. He is only rich."

"Well—but you know I love coaching, too," said Rose, light-heartedly. "I have promised to walk with him. Go and row little California—she's a great deal nicer than I am."

He turned abruptly away, his eyes hard and angry, but she did not notice.

"Judy Kent," she called; "Evvy is

going to take you rowing. I hope you realize just what that means."

"It means that you are the nicest girl here, Miss Kent," Eveleth interposed, with a laugh. "I swear to do every bit of the work. Will you come?" His manner was unwontedly energetic. A moment later he had his hand under Judy's elbow, and was running her down the path to the boats. Rose looked after them with a slight lifting of her eyebrows. Then she shrugged and turned with a smile to Mr. Kellogg.

Their walk ended at the first bench they came to, on a sunny green bank above the lake. Rose leaned in one corner with an arm along the rustic back and a white parasol behind her head, and smiled as he seated himself, heavily, prosperously, beside her.

"We compose very well in the landscape, you and I," she said. "Don't you think we add to the picture?"

"You are always the whole picture, everything you do," said Mr. Kellogg.

She laughed. "You are not a bad bit of landscape architecture yourself, you know," she suggested.

He moved an inch nearer. "Very good of you to think so," he said, comfortably.

Rose suppressed a yawn, and glanced inquiringly about the lake. A boat drifted into sight along the opposite bank, with trailing oars. The occupants sat facing each other, both with their elbows on their knees and their chins on their knuckles. They seemed deeply absorbed in their conversation.

"When will you teach me to drive four-in-hand?" Rose asked, abruptly. "You promised."

"To-morrow, if you like—and every other day, if you'll come. The coach is yours, you know."

She held up one exquisitely kept white hand, and bent it critically on its rounded wrist.

"Do you think that is strong enough for four?" she asked, anxiously.

"Let me see." He put out his hand toward it, but she drew it away, with a half smile that obviously indicated, "No, you don't!"

Mr. Kellogg moved another inch nearer. "Can't trust you with the horses unless you let me try your wrist," he persisted.

A ripple of laughter came across the lake from the drifting boat. Rose moved impatiently.

"Very well, then I won't drive," she said; but she mitigated it with a glance.

"Look at them like that and you won't need muscle to drive them—they'll do anything you say," lumbered Mr. Kellogg.

"Then you couldn't use blinders?" said Rose, prosaically.

"Oh, yes! blinders couldn't shut out eyes like yours. Feel them through anything." And Mr. Kellogg moved still nearer.

In the boat opposite, Eveleth was evidently being his most delightful self; both were too absorbed even to wave to a friend on the bank. Rose kicked irritably at the turf underfoot. It was right for Eveleth to do what she told him, but he need not do it quite so thoroughly!

"You have rather nice eyes yourself, you know," she said. "They're a much brighter brown than mine, aren't they?" She lifted hers gravely.

"Can't tell about mine—can't think of anything but yours." And Mr. Kellogg's arm stole along the back of the seat. Rose leaned forward, as though not noticing, a disconsolate frown gathering in her averted eyes. Eveleth had been so moody lately, she had half forgotten his charm. Evidently he was himself again. And she could have been enjoying life on the lake instead of—

"We might have gone boating ourselves," she said.

"But it's pretty nice here, don't you think? I'll take you boating next Summer in my yacht."

"I do love yachting," said Rose, wistfully; but her eyes were on the boat opposite.

"Well, you can make it yours. I'll take you anywhere you say—ask your own crowd."

"Oh, but how beautiful!"

He smiled complacently at her enthusiasm. "Better than a row-boat—though I bet they don't think so just this minute," with a nod and a laugh for the boat nosing against the other bank. "Eveleth's pretty hard hit, isn't he?"

Rose stared at him.

"Eveleth! With—little California?"

"Surely. You don't mean to say you haven't seen it. The others all have—say he's cracked about her. I don't blame him—very fresh, pleasant sort of a girl." Rose had recovered her self-possession, though her eyes still looked dazed.

"Of course she is, the dearest girl possible! Only, one doesn't think of Evvy as going in for the *grande passion*, does one?"

"Oh, quiet chaps like that always get it hardest," Mr. Kellogg assured her. "He's done for, all right; I know the symptoms. Can you guess why?"

"Because you have had them—oh, so often in your career," laughed Rose, getting up. "Come and walk. I am tired of this particular outlook, aren't you?"

"I couldn't be tired of any outlook that had you in it." And Mr. Kellogg rose with regretful effort.

When the white parasol had disappeared among the trees, some of the gaiety in the boat seemed to die out. Presently Eveleth bent to the oars again and sent them flying through the water, while Judy, leaning back in the stern, smiled at the world about her in happy silence. When at last a slight bump told her they were back at the landing, she rose regretfully, giving Eveleth both her hands.

"Hasn't it been a beautiful time!" she said, her honest blue eyes lifted straight to his.

His face softened; for an instant he looked half ashamed.

"You dear child!" he said.

VIII

"LET'S dress up for dinner," suggested Polly. The four women were

in Rose's room, lingering over a tray of tea.

"But we haven't anything to put on," said Mrs. Froley, who was lying across the foot of the bed with her head on her arm.

"Well, then, we might take something off."

There was a general laugh.

"Polly always was resourceful," said Rose, shaking her splendid brown hair down over her shoulders. "Nance brought an armful of kimonos with her—we might make it a Japanese dinner."

Polly scrambled up, excitedly. "Oh, Rose, do! I am a dream as a Jap; only, we'll need some make-up."

"Probably Nance brought it. She knows us!" Rose pushed open the door of the adjoining room. "Nance! We are going to dress up for dinner."

There was a slight grunt from within. "I knew that, child, before I started." And Nance appeared with a box of cosmetics and hairpins and a handful of artificial flowers. "Didn't have room to bring you much," she added.

"Nance, you're a wonder!" exclaimed Polly. "Let's see the kimonos. Oh, those two are Belle's; I recognize her serpent-of-the-Nile designs. Belle, did you ever choose anything that hadn't a snake in it somewhere?"

"I don't think you could describe Herbert as having a snake about him," drawled Mrs. Froley. "If he had, I might find him more amusing."

"Or he might find you more," supplemented Polly.

Mrs. Froley shook her head. "Husbands never find one amusing."

"Oh, Belle, don't be so pessimistic!" exclaimed Rose, who was seated before the mirror, trying Japanese effects in hair-dressing.

"I'm not. I am merely truthful. It is marriage that's the matter, not Herbert. It spoils everything. A lover greets you with 'dearest' and 'beautifullest,' and pleasant things like that; after a year of marriage, he says, 'Good evening, Isabel,' and

marches up-stairs. Heaven knows what it will be after three years."

"Probably 'Good-bye, Wasabel,' and a march to Dakota," said Polly.

Judy shouted with the rest, and hated herself for a secret shrinking. "I am a little backwoods prig," she thought, angrily. The brief depression vanished when she found herself in a kimono of rose-pink crêpe shading to faintest blue and embroidered with gold butterflies. Nance fastened pink roses above her ears, and Rose reddened her lips and gave her eyes an almond slant.

"It is a bath-wrapper at home, but it makes a very handsome dinner gown. Little California, you are pretty enough to eat," Rose commented, with kindly, smiling eyes. Judy furtively pressed her cheek against Rose's arm for an instant.

"I am having such a good time—and it's all you," she said, impetuously. Rose laughed and kissed her, and presently sent them away.

"I wish to burst on you all at once, a vision of loveliness," she explained. She was still laughing at Polly's parting comments when the door closed behind them. No one could have seemed gayer.

"What's the matter, Miss Rose?" asked Nance.

Rose put her arms about the gaunt form. "I don't know, Nance. Nothing, I fancy. Why did you ask?"

"You can't fool Nance, honey."

Rose rocked gently back and forth. "It aches so, Nance! Please rub it," she said, whimsically. Then she lifted her head with a long sigh. "Men aren't much good, Nancy. Don't believe in them. You think you've got them just where you can put your hand on them at any moment, then you turn your back a half-second—and it's all to do over again. They're a mean lot. Now, make me as stunning as you can; this is going to be my busy evening."

Dinner was to be served in the private sitting-room at the end of their suite. The men, who had been waiting more or less impatiently for an hour,

sprang up in amazement when four smiling, delightful Japanese ladies trotted in and made deep obeisance. There was a shout of applause.

"I knew they'd do it, some way or other," exclaimed Simeon. "Polly, you are the sweetest Jap dolly I ever saw. Can't I kiss you?"

"God knows, you are stronger than I am," quoted Polly, ostentatiously keeping the table between them.

Rose, in a white kimono embroidered in scarlet and gold, with scarlet flowers in her hair, had come in last, and stood smiling in the doorway. Her eyes sought Eveleth's, but he did not answer her smile, and there was an unexpected flash of hostility between them. She gave him a derisive nod, and his cool, deferential bow seemed to say, "Look your loveliest—it is nothing to me!" Her intention swung about like a weathercock, and her eyes grew reckless. She turned to Mr. Kellogg, who was unmistakably dazzled, and slipped her hand into his.

"Come, you are going to sit by me," she commanded. "There is no use struggling," she added. "I am a spoiled Japanese beauty, and I insist." And Mr. Kellogg, who was tripping over his feet in his eagerness, laughed with suddenly restored complacence.

Eveleth had already taken possession of Judy. "May I sit by you, Judy San?" he asked. "I suppose you will cry for rice and milk and a chocolate éclair. Do you think you can make out without them?"

She glanced at the raw oysters and the three small glasses in front of her. "If it is a coffee night, I can. Do you suppose it is?"

"Oh, yes! Kellogg is frightfully rich—he can afford anything." She looked across at him, heavy, complacent, leaning very close to Rose's shoulder, a slight flush on the big, smooth oval of his face, in which the features seemed to be set too high, leaving an unnecessary expanse of blank, unmodeled chin.

"I don't like him," she said, impulsively. Eveleth stretched his hand under the table and took hers.

"You are a discerning young woman," he said.

"Oh, look at them, already!" shrieked Polly. "Evvy, if you hold hands at the first course, *what* will you do at the last?"

The color flashed into Judy's face and her whole being winced for an instant.

Eveleth was quite undisturbed. "Wait and see," he suggested.

"Polly mustn't—she is too young," put in Mrs. Frole. "As a married woman—" And the tide drifted away from them again.

"Don't mind, Miss Kent," said Eveleth, cheerfully. "Polly is a vulgar little beast, but so are we all, for that matter. You might as well find us out."

"Prude! Prig! Backwoods!" was singing through Judy's mind. "Oh, I am not really so outrageously proper," she protested. "Really, I am quite human."

"I suspected as much." Eveleth held up a wine-glass. "Suppose we drink to—our common humanity." Judy lifted her glass. "To the merry devil within," he added, as the glasses touched.

"Long may it wave!" laughed Judy. Eveleth's eyes were on her face. "It is waving now—two red flags," he said. "Do you know, the first time I met you—that Sunday afternoon at Rose's—you blushed about something, and Rose put her finger on your cheek. I have seen your color rise a great many times since then, Judy San, but never without wanting to put my finger in the middle of it."

"Well, why didn't you?" she asked, with an air of innocence unconsciously borrowed from Polly.

"I was afraid it would—make you stop blushing."

She considered it seriously. "Do you mean you would harden my young character—or that my fine nature would scorn to put further temptation in your way?"

"All the fine nature in the world couldn't keep you from putting temptation in my way, Judy San, while you

have those adorable, honest blue eyes with the clean, healthy little devil in them—a little devil only just awake, half bewildered, but very glad to be there! And I am always wondering if your chin would not exactly fit the palm of my hand. See," he held it out, curved, before her; "don't you think they were made for each other?"

"Pit it out in papa's hand, Doody," called Polly, and a wave of laughter and shouted repartee drowned all coherent talk. Only Rose and Mr. Kellogg stayed out of it, talking in absorbed undertones, apparently unconscious of the rest. The glasses were filled and refilled with startling rapidity. Judy scarcely touched hers, but there was a more dangerous wine tingling in her veins. And she must not be a prude, out of her foolish ignorance; so she shouted with the rest, and hid fiercely, even from herself, her shrinking at the flushed faces and reckless tones. This was the world, the brilliant world that she had longed for! She was not going to miss her chance through country-bred squeamishness.

"Change partners," shouted Polly, suddenly. "Every man move up two places." Rose glanced up and her eyes met Eveleth's. The change would put him in Kellogg's place.

"We are entirely comfortable as we are, Polly," she objected. "Don't upset things."

"I will move if I may take Miss Kent with me—not otherwise," said Eveleth, placidly.

"I refuse to give up my partner. We are having a beautiful time, aren't we, Lord Merrington?" Mrs. Frole appealed.

"Rippin', I am sure," was the stolidly cheerful answer.

Simeon burst into loud weeping. "I am the only one who isn't popular," he wailed. "Everybody but Polly wants to stay out—nobody loves me. I wish I was dead!"

"Oh, Simmy—dear Simmy!" Rose and Polly both put their arms about him, patting and comforting. "It's all a mistake—everybody loves you, Simmy! We all want to sit by you."

Simeon rocked back and forth between them, still inconsolable.

"Of course he isn't going to cheer up while he's getting that," said Mr. Kellogg, trying to speak lightly, though his eyes glowered at Rose's white arm on Simeon's collar.

"Well, who would?" retorted Simeon, beaming with sudden impudence.

Rose drew away. "I think he'll do now," she said, drily.

"But there might be a relapse—poor Simmy!" And Polly took her coffee with her round pink face against his shoulder.

Presently Rose sprang up. "I want to dance," she exclaimed. "Have the table taken away. Oh, if we only had some music!"

"Music?" Mr. Kellogg rose at once. "I'll see what I can do." By the time the room was cleared he was back with two Italians, each with a violin.

"You are too wonderful!" Rose exclaimed. "I believe, if one asked for the moon, you would look at your watch, step out and get it."

"I would if you asked for it." And Mr. Kellogg radiated satisfaction.

The musicians were established in the next room to leave more space. Judy secretly rejoiced in the knowledge that she waltzed remarkably well, but she quickly found that this accomplishment would not be needed. Rose caught her hand and whirled her down the middle of the room; then the four kimonos began circling and swaying about Simeon Knowles.

"Kotow, kotow to the great Yen How,
And wish him the longest of lives,"

they chanted, while Simmy folded his arms high on his chest and eyed them haughtily.

"With his one little, two little, three little,
four little,
Left little, lone little wives!"

They had flopped softly on their knees before him, their foreheads to the floor.

"Go on, do it again! I like it!" said Simmy.

"It's my turn. Do it to me," demanded Mr. Kellogg; but the music

had changed and the line was skipping madly up and down with Simeon in the lead, Judy as reckless as any of them. Her feet seemed inspired; they knew a hundred little steps and twirls that she had never dreamed of before. All self-consciousness, all her half-shy reserve, fell away from her; she was only a crazy little geisha, wild with the joy of dancing. First one caught her hand, then another, skirt-dance followed cake-walk; now they had fallen into a big circle and were dancing hand in hand, each according to his pleasure; the circle contracted till they were in a laughing bunch in the middle of the room, then an arm seized her and whirled her away, and presently it was a triumphal march with quick, sharp steps and imaginary banners waving. The others stopped now and then before a side table crowded with bottles and siphons, but Judy was conscious of nothing but the sound of the violins and the spirit in her feet.

It was a knock at the door that finally broke the enchantment. The proprietor was apologetic, deferential—but the lady in the room below was complaining; could they, perhaps—a little more quietly—he was sorry to ask it—

Rose, who had opened the door, was all smiling courtesy and promises; then the door closed and Polly relieved her feelings by jumping up and down hard in one spot.

"I'm hoping this is right over the old cat's head!" she announced.

"I'll take her feet," declared Simmy, and jumped vigorously opposite her.

"She couldn't be that long," Polly objected; and the two wrangled the matter, still jumping, till the distance between them was no more than a foot. Then he deftly caught her up, there was a spring and a quick swirl, and she was perched on his stout shoulder, bowing and kissing her hand.

The others shouted with laughter, but Judy felt suddenly cold and a little sick. People who were complained of in hotels—she had always looked down on them from an im-

measurable distance. What had seemed gay became all at once rowdyish, the red faces and loud voices were horrible to her clearing senses. Rose, amused and uncritical, had nevertheless kept her head, and Eveleth was his imperturbable self, but the rest were obviously—Judy's fresh, clean, country soul turned in anguish from the discovery. Lord Merrington walked unsteadily, Mr. Kellogg, standing beside her, laid his hand on her arm. She shrank away. It was like the shame of a bad dream, that plunges one half-clothed into a public street. "I don't want to be here!" was her passionate thought.

Mrs. Froley switched a garland of artificial flowers across her face, with an insolent laugh. Polly, riding joyously with one hand clutching Simeon's hair, shouted to her.

"Little California, come on up! Mount her, somebody, on the other shoulder."

"Come on! Step lively, lady!" cried Simeon, puffing but valiant. "Plenty of room in the front of the car!"

"One little, two little wives," sang Polly, drumming with her heels.

"Quit that or I'll drop you," commanded Simeon, clutching at her feet. The struggle became uproarious, others joining in, and Judy, unnoticed, slipped through the long window to the balcony outside. Her cheeks burned with a mortification she could not analyze; an unbearable sense of being degraded clung to her like a soiled garment.

"I hate them, I hate them!" she gasped. "Oh, why did I come?" She started at a step beside her.

"Don't mind—it is only I," said Eveleth. "Are you tired, child?"

The kindly voice was too much for her unstrung nerves. She put out her hands to him, not knowing what she did.

"Oh, Evvy, I don't like it!" she half-sobbed.

His arms closed about her, very gently. "Of course you don't, dear little girl," he said. "Don't mind.

You see, you are a lady, and—Polly isn't, that's all. Now do you know why you are too good for us?"

"Not for you and Rose!" She was still clinging to him, conscious only of the healing comfort he had brought, her face lifted with the earnestness of her protest. She looked very little and young in the soft kimono with the roses half falling from her hair. Eveleth drew her closer.

"I am so sorry. I know it hurts," he whispered. "Don't go back there—slip in your own window. I am going to get away myself very soon. Don't worry, dear child—it's all right." He bent down and kissed the curve of her cheek. "Good night, Judy San."

She stole away without a word, and he waited till she was in her own room that she might not hear the burst of laughter and comment that would greet his reappearance.

IX

JUDY slept very little that night. Nance's phrase beat through her thoughts with dreary persistence—"the kind that gets hurt." Was this what the wise old woman had meant? Assuredly, she was hurt, unbearably. The brilliant world that had condescended to admit her had turned at a touch into a cheap and vulgar little crowd for which any well-bred being was too good. Rose was still her big, beautiful, unmarred self; but how could she bear them? The remembrance of Kellogg's touch was like a stain on her arm, that she shuddered away from in vain. Yet through all her misery of offended maidenhood ran a curious thrill of exaltation. Eveleth's arms were still about her, his lips against her cheek. "Good night, Judy San!" The words seemed to be a talisman against pain, and she whispered them over and over till at last they brought a dim comfort, and she fell asleep.

The earliest sunlight, fresh and clean as spring water, was bubbling through the window when she awoke.

Crisp and still and frostily fragrant, the morning was irresistible. A cold bath seemed to wash the horror of the night away, leaving only the secret exaltation. She dressed and hurried down through the quiet halls to a side door. Opening it was like a plunge into a mountain lake; the brilliance of little waves seemed to flood about her, the tingle of strong swimming was in her fingers. Beyond green stretches glowed the Autumn woods in the softer brilliance of their dim rose and pale saffron mood; curled and brittle leaves crackled under her feet. It was, after all, a good world, out of doors. Her heart turned back to the land of gaunt, bare mountains and aromatic underbrush, to the solemn aisles of the redwoods and the print of wild feet in the brown earth, with a longing that was like physical sickness. Oh, for the movement of her good horse under her, the clean west wind in her face, a stalwart woodsman beside her on the trail! The last thought startled her. She certainly was not homesick for Johnny. "Good night, Judy San," beat thrillingly in her ears. Both these men had kissed her. Johnny's, "Forgive me, dear old chap!" and his badly concealed triumph made her smile as at an episode of her childhood; Eveleth's kiss had set the world reeling.

She left the hotel grounds and presently turned down a quiet lane, eager for a close look at a beautiful young horse, intricately booted, which was following a groom with the free and leisurely stride of blood and breeding. A nearer view brought a puzzled frown. Of course it was impossible; and yet no one in all the valley at home knew the famous young Border better than she. She had rubbed his soft muzzle when he was not a week old, riding over to the Rice stables with Johnny for the express purpose, at the invitation of the owner. She had superintended his education, perched on the fence surrounding the half-mile track, while Mr. Rice, leaning beside her, dilated on points and pedigree. Later, Border had been brought at regular intervals to call on her, as a serious

tribute to her intelligent appreciation, and once or twice, when the way was clear and the road-bed in proper condition, had spun her down the county road for a breathless half-mile, the stop watch clutched in her hand and her whole being a silent shout of delight. And now he seemed to be coming to meet her, three thousand miles from home—the same perfect bay coat, the point of white between the eyes, the unmistakable line of head and shoulder and flank. She could only stand and stare.

"Well, my Lord, if it ain't Miss Judy!"

Judy started, and for the first time looked at the groom, a spidery little man, so round-shouldered as to be almost humpbacked, whose shrewd, greenish eyes were beaming at her out of a wizened red face.

"Sam!" she cried, putting out her hand. "Why, where on earth did you come from, you and Border?"

"Californy." Sam's grasp would have crushed a less sturdy hand. "Me and Border have come on for the Horse Show; Mr. Rice, he's here, too. Well, it does seem natural to see you! Stoppin' down here?"

"Just over night." Judy was patting and feeling the proud Border in a way he evidently recognized as initiated, for he stood contentedly, sniffing at her sleeve. "The old beauty! It's so good to see him, Sam. Tell me about everybody." Her voice sounded homesick.

"Well, your mama looks real well. Don't see so much of Mr. Meldrum nowadays." Sam's eyes were delicately averted. "Lumber business don't keep him up there as steady as it used to—he's down in 'Frisco considerable. He got over his accident fine."

"Accident?" Judy's face was lifted abruptly from Border's neck. "What accident?"

"My Lord, didn't no one write you about that? Well, 'twasn't so serious, neither; but it might have been." Sam backed up against a tree for support, letting Border thrust his critical nose into the grass. "It was like this.

Some folks came up from the city to see the lumber camp and the mills, and Mr. Meldrum was doin' the polite with them blue roans of his and the high spring wagon. 'Twasn't like him to have the harness out of shape, I will say, but when they was comin' at a good clip down the Gulley road—and right beyond the first turn, mind you—the nigh horse stumbled pretty bad—you know he always did stumble, that Pete. I could have broke him of it in a week, but Mr. Meldrum, he——"

"Yes, yes! and——"

"Well, the rein just snapped like a piece of string—and this comin' licketty cut down the Gulley road! If it had been the other rein, he could have swung 'em up onto the bank, but as 'twas, a pull would have sent 'em all over the edge to kingdom come. You remember when Fish's boys went over there, horse and all? They never——"

"Yes—but what did he do?" Judy's fingers were twisted tightly into Border's mane.

"Well, the roans bolted, of course, and the women begins hollerin'. He yells to 'em to sit tight, and then, Miss Judy, he ups and over the dashboard down onto the pole with the roans runnin' like rabbits, and he gets 'em both by the bits with a leg over Pete to steady him, and he has 'em stopped up against a bank in a quarter of a mile. But the horse fell on him at the end and bruised him some; he was limpin' for a week or more. Those city folks—my! They thought he was the finest ever."

"Oh, it was fine, it was just like him," exclaimed Judy. "And how he would hate the fuss afterward!" She laughed excitedly.

Sam's puny red face nodded at her shrewdly as he drew Border into the road again.

"He's a lot of a man, Miss Judy, and don't you forget it," he said.

When he had gone on, Judy turned slowly back to the hotel. The picture was vividly before her; the steep Gulley road, the frightened roans, Johnny's quick, strong movements, daring but

cautious, his face grimly set, as she had seen it more than once.

"Oh, he is a man!" she exclaimed, with a sudden new appreciation of what that meant. She thrust away the unwelcome thought that Eveleth could not have done it. "Physical strength and courage aren't everything," she told herself, impatiently; but all the traditions of her training rebelled at this. "Well, he would die without making any fuss," she argued. "Or jump and save himself?" suggested some unwelcome intuition. "It isn't true, it isn't true!" she cried, under her breath; but the beauty of the morning was dimmed for the moment.

Then, looking up, she saw Eveleth himself, lean and listless, with drooping shoulders and hair prematurely gray, cross the hotel porch and turn down the path. "*Good night, Judy San!*" The color flashed into Judy's cheeks, her heart seemed to beat in great, single throbs. She longed to run to him, yet something made her dart into a side path and hide behind a clump of bushes, her trembling fingers twisted tightly together. His face, as he passed, looked pale and tired and not happy, and her whole being ached with her longing to comfort him. The picture on the Gulley road was forgotten. She stood and watched him, her palm pressed against her cheek, until he had disappeared down the road to the station. At that moment there was nothing in the world but the gentleness of his arms about her, the tenderness of his voice—"Good night, Judy San."

X

THE ride back to town was a silent one. Eveleth had already gone by train, leaving a note of excuse, and the others, all but Rose, were savage or pensive, according to temperament. Rose seemed as fresh and gay as ever, but after a few attempts at rallying the rest, yielded to the general depression.

"All you need is a few black plumes and a funeral march," she commented.

"Oh, Rose, be still," pleaded Polly, pressing her knuckles against her temples. "If you are too thick-skinned to appreciate the 'cold, gray dawn of the morning after,' at least respect our finer sensibilities."

"Everybody hates everybody," added Simeon, gloomily; and they laughed reluctantly, then relapsed into silence.

Twelve hours of healing sleep set the world straight for Judy, and she fell vigorously to work. In a week the play would be ready to submit; and in two weeks her money would be gone. She accepted the situation stoutly, frowning down a secret clutch of fright.

"Be a sport!" she told herself. All the biographies of success showed just such struggles with poverty and fate. Her way had so far been abnormally easy, with Rose's encouragement in her ears. "The child wonder of the Pacific Coast!" She laughed at the phrase, but it was an excited laugh.

After a strenuous morning she went out to buy some lunch, but brought back instead a magazine containing a full-page picture of Eveleth.

"I wasn't hungry, anyway," she explained to herself, over two stale soda-crackers and a glass of water. Then she went back to her writing, but as the afternoon wore on it halted more and more; she re-read the finished scenes with growing mistrust.

"I wonder if it is no good at all—if I am a little fool?" The thought brought a chill of desolation that would not go away. When dusk came she threw herself face down on the bed, discouraged, heartsick, and miserably frightened. Brave and determined sentences shaped themselves on her lips, but the spirit within was as forlorn as a lost child.

A knock startled her to her feet. She opened the door, and, as the lank form of Nance emerged from the darkness of the hall, she could have wept with joy and relief. All Nance's laconic severity could not hide the warm human kindness beneath; and Judy was sorely in need of human kindness at that moment.

"Nance! Come in; I am glad to see

you," she exclaimed, with an eagerness that betrayed more than she knew.

"Evening, Miss Kent," said Nance, sedately. "I brought you a note from Miss Rose. She wants an answer."

Judy lighted the gas and broke the note open with an excited conviction of good news. She read:

DEAR LITTLE CALIFORNIA:

Do you want a job? I told the management about your whistle act, and they think that we might run it in in the wood scene, where I am waiting for Evvy. You needn't go on, you know—just stand in the wings and pipe. Want to? Your salary won't be large, but it will be at least visible to the naked eye. Be at the theatre seven-thirty, to try it on.

ROSE.

Judy looked up with a shining face. "Oh, will I?" she cried. The joyous relief in her voice pieced out the meaning the wise old eyes had been reading in the bare, dingy room, the tin kettle and the empty cracker-box and the table strewn with manuscript.

"Pretty hard work, writin' plays," Nance suggested, when Judy had scribbled an answer.

"Indeed it is, Nance. One almost gets—discouraged." This was distinctly confidential, from Judy; but hunger for sympathy was even stronger than her instinctive reserve at the moment.

"That's so. I s'pect your mama's real proud of you." Nance did not miss the slight hardness that came into the girl's face.

"Oh, she doesn't think much of play writing, I'm afraid!"

"Well, mothers don't, sometimes," said Nance, vaguely, rising. She paused before a photograph of a pleasant old gabled house, heaped up and running over with vines. "You must have a lovely home out there."

"Yes, it is a lovely home," Judy admitted. "There are roses up to the roof, and I have a horse to ride and a big room with five windows." She glanced about the grubby cell with its one window opening on rear walls; then she laid her hand on her manuscript and smiled brightly. "But I'd rather be here, Nance!"

"Well, I s'pect you would!" And Nance took her departure, shaking her head soberly in the dark of the hall. "City's full of 'em," she muttered; "new crop every year—Lord help 'em!"

Happiness and a good dinner made Judy as brave as a lion. She piped and trilled in the empty theatre, and the management nodded a tolerant approval. The fate of the play was still uncertain; they were ready to add anything that might appeal to popular favor. She was offered the smallest possible salary, which she accepted at once with an exultation severely hidden at the time, though it crept out afterward in the seclusion of Rose's dressing-room.

"You see before you a member of the famous Rose Barron company," she announced, drawing herself up and saluting. "I go on at nine forty-five evenings and three forty-five matinées—at least, my whistle goes on; and I get paid for it! Isn't it bully?" She seized Rose's hand and kissed it, then turned away, blushing like a school-boy. "Don't mind me—I'm no end of a goat," she muttered, in apology.

Rose caught and pulled her back, laughing. "You funny child!" she exclaimed. Judy's upward glance was half ashamed but half impish. Rose kissed her flushed cheek. "See that you behave, or I will have you fired from my company," she said, sitting down at her dressing-table to add the last touches to her make-up. She was simply dressed in country white for the first act; her gorgeousness came later.

"What's behaving?" asked Judy.

"Being just as bad as you know how," said Eveleth's voice, from the open door. "Isn't it, Rose?"

Rose's eyes had narrowed a little, but she did not turn her head. "I am afraid little California doesn't know how at all," she said, coolly. "Why don't you devote your spare time to teaching her?"

"Oh, do!" said Judy, consciously little-girlish—a new accomplishment.

"I can't fancy a more delightful occupation." And Eveleth dropped lazily down on the hard, chintz-covered lounge. "I have a great deal of spare time in this play; I sometimes think of going home and to bed between my appearances. Will you amuse me every evening, Miss Kent?" His half-shut eyes met Rose's in the mirror, but were instantly averted.

"Do, my dear, and we'll double your salary," Rose put in, studying herself impersonally with a hand-glass. "It is so important that the leading man should be kept amused and happy!"

Nance had appeared in the doorway with a box, obviously of flowers. Eveleth took it from her and carried it over to Rose.

"Yes, my dear Rose, a leading man's feelings are always important," he said. She lifted her eyebrows slightly, but made no other reply as she uncovered an exquisite bunch of pale-lavender orchids. The card was in an envelope, which she thrust into her gown, unopened.

"How careless of you," he commented. "If you lost it you would never know whom they were from."

"Oh, I dare say my heart would tell me," said Rose, with a shrug.

"Hearts are unreliable authorities. If it is too sacred to be read before us, we can—ah, here is your call. May Miss Kent and I stay here?"

"Of course, gladly." Rose was brushing the orchids caressingly across her lips. "Here, Nance, put the darlings in water. I will wear them in the third act." She hurried away, and Nance took the flowers somewhat disrespectfully, thrusting them into a tumbler with her lower lips contemptuously protruded.

"Some folks is too rich to be any good," she muttered.

"Nance, you are the wisest woman in the world," said Eveleth, throwing himself down beside Judy. His cheerfulness seemed to have vanished with Rose.

"H'm! Wisht I could say you was the wisest man, Mr. Eveleth," she said, not unkindly, turning away to busy

herself with Rose's gown, which hung behind a chintz curtain at the other end of the room.

"I am glad of it," said Eveleth, with a sigh. "Wouldn't you hate to be as wise as Nance, Miss Kent?"

"No; I'd love it. Then I'd know things that bother me now."

"What things? Perhaps I can help."

"Well, whether I can write plays, for one."

He looked grave. "That, of course, I can't tell you. You care very much?" She nodded silently. "Ah, I wish you did not! So few can do it, and so many want to."

"But some must succeed—why not me?" She spoke bravely, though she had grown a little pale. "Oh, I must, I really must!"

"Then of course you will," he said, quickly. His hand closed over hers on the couch between them. "I am sure you could do anything you set out to do, little California!" His smile cleared away the momentary depression. "What else bothers you?"

Judy's heart seemed to be beating down in the hand that lay under his. She must take it away, of course—in just a minute.

"There is still—that night, you know," she said, with averted eyes. "You can't guess what a country prig I seemed to myself, even when I—hated it most. I have thought and thought; my mind believes I am in the right, hating it, but I feel all in the wrong! Perhaps being a—lady isn't so important as—oh, I can't explain. But I wish I understood."

"I know. Sometimes it must seem as if the—not-ladies got more out of it," he said, sympathetically. "But you can't help it, you know; you will go the way you were born and bred." He held her hand closer. "Don't worry, Judy San. We know that we like each other, you and I, and nothing else matters, does it?"

Judy smiled happily. "And we both love Rose and hate Mr. Kellogg," she added.

He glanced at her sharply, but her

face was entirely innocent. "Quite true!" he agreed. He let his head fall back on a cushion, and stared thoughtfully into space. Judy drew her hand away and felt a momentary pang that he made no effort to keep it; but a glance at his face made her forget her own feelings.

"You're tired," she said, speaking with boyish abruptness, because the personal was always so difficult to her.

He pressed his palms to his forehead. "Yes, Judy San, I'm tired and I'm——"

"Call for Mr. Eveleth!" sounded in the passage outside.

Eveleth drew himself up lazily. "It is just as well, you know," he said. "I believe I was about to weep on your neck. Au revoir, Miss Kent."

Rose came back at the end of the act, but Eveleth did not appear again until it was nearly time for Judy's performance. He made a pleasant pretense of being vastly excited, offered her drinks and smelling-bottles and insisted on feeling her pulse, while Rose, looking on, laughed and abetted him, seemingly at her gayest. She was on the stage when Eveleth led Judy to her place in the wings and gave her her cue with a whispered, "Now!"

Surrounded by the crude backs of canvas trees, Judy began her bird calls, a little tremulously at first, but piping with growing courage as she forgot the scene about her. She was back on the trail with the birds answering from branches far beneath and the sun steeping the sage and everlasting, her horse moving against her knees; only, it was Eveleth who rode beside her. The last trill brought a strange sound, like an exaggerated rustle. She opened her eyes with a start. The house was clapping, and Rose, on the stage, was smiling at her. Hidden from every one but Rose, Eveleth bent over Judy's hand and kissed it lingeringly, then took his cue and stepped out on the stage. The quarrel scene that followed was played with unusual spirit.

Judy went home with her heart singing. Some—poor wretches!—had

to work for their living, but she could get hers by way of the most delicious play in the world. Her long mornings over her manuscript were, after all, only a beautiful game, with never a dull moment; and when night came she could sing for her supper with dear people to smile at her and be glad about it. In the dark of the hall she pressed the back of her hand to her cheek, then to her lips.

"Dear, dear, *dear!*" she whispered, when the light flared up on Eveleth's portrait.

XI

JOHN MELDRUM cut through the thin streams of anxious travelers that crossed to and from the trains, and made his direct, unhurried way to the street. People instinctively stepped aside for him, or turned to glance a second time. In spite of his conventional clothes, there was something in his big, yet lithe, frame, his tanned face, his keen, deliberate eyes, wholly free from nervousness or self-consciousness, that marked him apart from the rest. The tide of puny and careworn clerks going to their homes at this hour made him seem like a mastiff among terriers.

After a glance half-amused and half-disgusted at the tangled traffic of Forty-second street, he looked about for the nearest possible hotel, with some dim idea of keeping near the point of escape; then he made for it with a calm disregard for traffic that caused some heartfelt swearing on the part of harassed drivers. John Meldrum was not accustomed to the indignity of dodging and leaping for a mere horse, and did not intend to begin now. He stood civilly for the trolley-car to pass, but horseflesh must wait on his convenience—which it did, hauled abruptly to its hind legs. The comments, though deep, were not too loud; Johnny looked entirely capable of defending his own methods.

After a bath and dinner, he asked a policeman which direction was downtown and which east, and started out

as confidently as he would have crossed a strange wood after a glance at sun or moon. Drivers hunched on top of waiting hansoms held up an inviting forefinger, but did not tempt him. "I'd as lief ride in a sunbonnet," was his inward comment.

The thought that he was less than a mile from Judy quickened his stride and set him smiling to himself. For the moment, the anxiety that had harried him into coming was forgotten; he could think of nothing but alert blue eyes, a brown cheek childishly curved, a sweet, honest mouth over a determined chin, gallant, boyish shoulders, strong movements, a frank smile—his fingers clenched suddenly into his palms.

"My girl!" he said, under his breath.

The block to which the address led him brought back his anxiety. Even in the lamplight it seemed dreary beyond bearing—mean little shops huddled between crumbling old brownstone houses, a stable crowding a new flat building, high and narrow, latticed up the front with fire-escapes. A frowsy head thrust out of a lighted window made him frown sharply. Judy's few letters had said nothing about her manner of living; yet he knew she had very little money. How was she staying on, week after week? Mrs. Kent, in her vaguely dismal way, seemed to have washed her hands of the matter. Judy always "got along some way"; she had "a good home to come to any minute, but if she chose to go running about the country, it was her own affair"; nowadays a daughter seemed to think she was to gratify every whim, no matter what it cost. Meldrum had ended his call abruptly, but he was back again the following week, and the week after. When it was obvious that Judy was being left wholly to her own resources, he arranged his business affairs for an absence of several weeks, and left for New York.

The old, four-story house at which he finally halted was a little less forlorn than its neighbors, though dingy enough. The servant who answered

his ring told him that Miss Kent had already gone to the theatre.

"She don't go on till after nine, but she's generally up there early," she added, with Irish sympathy for his disappointment.

"To be sure," said Meldrum, calmly. "Just what theatre is it? Oh, yes, the Columbian. Thank you."

He hurried away in dread of what she might tell him. Judy on the stage! Hundreds of strange men and women staring at her night after night, paint on her face, dressed in exaggerated finery or in—

"My God!" he exclaimed, wrathfully, stopping short.

"Keb, sir?" said a voice above him.

"Yes; Columbian Theatre—quick." And Johnny stepped into the hansom without a thought for the indignity of being aproned in, the reins out of his reach.

For an interminable hour he sat cramped in an orchestra chair, his eyes fixed on the stage, yet wholly unconscious of what was going on there. Every entrance gave him a stab of fright, followed by a deep breath of relief as Judy did not appear. The people about him laughed, or cried, or clapped, but at what he neither knew nor cared. He was waiting, blind and deaf to everything in the world but the misery of suspense. It was long past nine now. His fine, sound, reserved, out-of-doors Judy! How could she bear it?

The scene changed to a green and tangled wood. The illusion was good enough to give Johnny a pang of homesickness. Some one in white seemed to be watching and listening. A hush fell, on the stage, on the house. His heart seemed to stop beating; he knew now that she was coming. Then, clear and fine and sweet, out of the green depths came a whistled call. Bird answered bird, and the meadow-lark fluted up and down among them till the tiny chorus rose to a final ecstatic trill, and seemed to end among the branches. The audience laughed and clapped, but Meldrum sat rigid—shaken, glad, breathlessly homesick.

A sudden tide of elemental feeling made his muscles tighten with a sense that he could remove mountains for his love. He left the theatre and found the stage entrance.

"I have come for Miss Kent," he said, a ring of mastery in his voice; he meant far more than the conventional phrase.

Judy's gasp of excitement at Meldrum's card was followed by a moment of dismay. Her world was perfect as it was; she dreaded any new element. A week's salary already lay in her purse, to-morrow she was to read her play to Rose; and over everything was the glamour of Eveleth's devotion. She tried not to think presumptuously, to keep down the beating of her heart with the fact that he was "very kind;" yet she could not ignore that even with the glorious Rose present it was to her that he constantly turned. She was living a fairy-tale, and the entrance of Meldrum's practical, vigorous personality seemed to threaten its delicate fabric. Then she was ashamed of her reluctance, and ran out.

"Johnny Meldrum!" she exclaimed, with both hands outstretched, and at sight of him, splendid of physique, simple and manly and frank, all her mean little complexities vanished, leaving only honest delight. "Dear old Johnny," she said from her heart, "I never was so pleased in my life! How did it happen?"

"It didn't happen." He was smiling down on her. "I brought it about myself. Come out and have supper or something. Isn't there a place near here where we can talk?"

Something in his voice gave Judy a tremor of fright, but she talked intrepidly over it as she led the way to the nearest café. A raised balcony at one end offered a measure of seclusion among its artificial palms. Johnny drew up to their table with a smile of satisfaction.

"It is like our little bats in San Francisco," he said. "Don't you wish this was the Palace grill-room?"

"Indeed I don't," she answered. She prolonged the ordering as much as

possible, but at last he laid down the menu and confronted her with hands thrust into his pockets, his chair slightly tilted.

"Now, then, Judith Kent, tell me the entire story of your life," he commanded.

Her eyes curved into a mischievous smile. "But you know I am such a reserved little cuss."

"Not with me, old chap—please," he urged, gravely. "I have come three thousand miles to find out. You wrote me that Miss Barron had encouraged you and that you were writing a new play; that is absolutely all I have got in answer to nine letters."

"Well, I fancy that is about all there is to tell. Let's begin on bread and butter—I'm hungry."

"I want to know what you have been living on."

"My kind and generous mother—until this week." She put her hand proudly on her purse. "Want to see my salary?"

"I suppose you think it is none of my business." Johnny's tone was startled. The idea had evidently just occurred to him.

"Indeed, I don't! It's bully of you to care." Judy spoke with remorseful warmth. "You see, my expenses are almost nothing—you saw where I live! That is why I could stay so long."

"And of course you have your fare back; you could always go home," he conceded.

She tried to say, "Of course," but her tongue refused the lie.

"Only, I won't be ready to go till I have something to show for it," she said, hastily. "You know I have to support myself; and why should I work for my living when I can play for it?"

"You are happy?"

"Happy?" Her voice thrilled at the word. "I am so happy I could stand up right here and yell!"

His face clouded. "Because of your work, and the encouragement?"

"And the excitement. And knowing different kinds of men and women. Oh, Johnny, this is life!"

"And yet you are homesick sometimes?" He spoke dejectedly; his head dropped forward.

"For the mountains, and my horse—and for you, yes; oh, frightfully, at moments. I want to ride down the redwood cañon trail, and go fishing up Silver Creek, and climb Mount Grizzly in a soupy fog with the sun coming out clear on the top and the west wind straight off the ocean!" An excited color had risen in her cheeks. "Oh, Johnny, I love that best, but everything I want is still—here."

Their supper had been placed in front of them, and he served her mechanically.

"Then I suppose there is nothing for me to do but go home," he said, at last. "I can't help you and you don't want me—yet." His eyes were so compelling that she had to look up, though her own quickly fell again. "You are going to care for me some day, Judith Kent," he went on, quietly. "When the glamour of all this wears off, you are going to come back to me—just as you are coming back to the mountains. We have a stronger hold on you than anything here. We'll wait."

"No, no!" She spoke hurriedly, almost angrily. "It is not true—you mustn't think it. You will always be my very best friend, but—"

"Well, wait and see," he interrupted. His calmness exasperated her.

"There is nothing to wait and see about," she exclaimed. "You have no right to take that tone. I don't care for you and I never shall, and I resent it!"

He grew pale, but made no answer, and Judy's wrath died down to remorse.

"Oh, I'm a beast," she muttered. "Don't bother about me—I'm not worth it." He smiled at her, reassuringly, and went on with his supper.

"Well, then, I think I'll hit the trail for home in the morning," he said, presently. She protested, but was inwardly relieved. They became unexpectedly gay over their dessert,

laughing and reminiscing as if nothing had happened. When, on her own steps an hour later, she put out her hand for good-bye, he held it for a moment. He was standing below her, and their eyes were on a level.

"Judy, is there anyone else?" he asked.

"No," she said, quickly; but the color surged into her cheeks. "No, Johnny, truly," she pleaded.

He pressed her hand between his palms. "Good-bye, dear girl. If you need me at any time——"

"Yes, I know," said Judy, grateful but restless. She was impatient to get back into the fairy-tale.

XII

JUDY awoke to a Sunday morning of brilliant sunshine and the thrilling consciousness that she was to take her play to Rose at two o'clock. Already Johnny's visit seemed remote and unreal; she scarcely gave him a thought, except when a striking clock reminded her that his train was leaving. She spent the morning pottering over her manuscript, forced down as much lunch as her happy excitement would allow, and started for Rose's apartment a half-hour too early, so that she had to walk very slowly and even go round the block a couple of times at the end.

Rose was in a little lounging-room that opened off her sitting-room, gorgeous in the scarlet-and-white kimono, her brown eyes brimming with kindness. She pulled Judy down and kissed her; Rose was incapable of the jealousy that hates its rival. All her fury would be for the man, not for the chance object of his defection.

Polly was seated on the foot of the couch, and made a pretense of leaving.

"Though I don't see why I can't stay and hear it, too," she complained.

"It will bore you," Judy protested; but she was secretly pleased.

They were a stimulating audience. Rose's expressive face changed with

every demand on it, becoming amused, uplifted, distressed, vindictive or rapturous as the action proceeded. Polly gasped loudly at the dangers and chuckled at the witticisms, breaking into a loud cheer when Judy, flushed and trembling, threw down her manuscript.

"Well, she is a child wonder!" was her exclamation.

"Oh, there is far more to it than to the other," Rose was saying. "Why, there is action every minute. I don't see how you ever worked it all out by yourself!" They fell to discussing the various scenes, emphasizing their praise with an occasional criticism. It was perhaps the happiest half-hour of Judy's life.

"I'll tell you who ought to do it—Miriam Walsh and Roy Kennedy," Rose said, finally. "It wouldn't do for me; that wants a stock company. But they would be great in it. Can't you see Miriam holding off the strikers?"

"And Kennedy with a bandaged head—Kennedy's head always gets bandaged before the evening is out," said Polly.

"I can help you to meet them. I've known them for years," Rose added. Disappointment was swallowed up by new hope before it could make itself felt. Judy did not realize that her play was rejected, only that there was a fresh prospect for it.

Nance's knock finally interrupted them.

"Comp'ny, Miss Rose," she announced through the door.

"Let me stay here; I want to make some changes," Judy begged. "Oh, you have been so good, both of you!"

"Nonsense. We have had a beautiful time," said Rose, as they left her. She was sorry she had stayed when she heard Eveleth's voice in the next room. The proposed changes became suddenly less interesting and she listened wistfully, wondering how soon she could follow. She could hear their words distinctly through the door, which was not quite shut.

"This isn't fancy dress," Rose was

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evidently explaining her kimono. "But we have been hearing little California read her play, and I hadn't a chance to dress."

"I am glad you had not," said Eveleth, in the tone of obviously empty flattery with which he had lately exasperated Rose. "How was the play?" There was a moment's pause. Judy waited, smiling, for the answer.

"Rotten," said Polly, in a penetrating whisper.

"Oh, Polly!" protested Rose.

"Well, wasn't it? Did you ever hear anything much worse?"

"But she is such a dear child. What does it matter if she can't write plays?" Rose argued.

"Did you tell her it was bad?" Eveleth asked; his voice sounded amused.

Polly sighed. "Oh, no; we slobbered all over it. She's a dear kid—we had to. But Rose is going to turn the thing loose on some one else. I call that unfair."

"Oh, I will only introduce her. Miriam will understand," said Rose, easily. "It is so much better to learn things gradually than to be knocked down with them."

"Why is it so bad?" Eveleth asked.

"Why is my singing so bad?" Rose's voice suggested a shrug. "Because I can't sing! She hasn't any real talent; it is just a jumble of other people's ideas and youthful enthusiasm. But she is so dear and serious about it. I am very fond of that child."

"She's all right," echoed Polly.

Judy sat on the edge of the couch, very still and very white. She felt no anger, only a great and bitter humiliation. So she was, after all, a little fool! They had known it all along, but because she was "a dear child"—she pushed the manuscript passionately from her lap and buried her face in a cushion. She seldom cried, but now hot, bitter tears welled up in her eyes and slowly brimmed over. She sobbed with a sudden longing for Eveleth, for the kindness of his voice, for the gentleness of his arms. After all, even if she could not write plays, he was still there. She seemed to curl up against

him in her misery. "Good night, Judy San." The phrase still held mysterious comfort.

Presently Polly took her leave, and a silence fell in the other room.

"Do you want tea, Evvy?" Rose's voice suggested a suppressed yawn. "I will make Miss Kent come out and amuse you."

"That would be delightful," agreed Eveleth. Judy, in an anguish of dismay for her tear-stained face, did the only possible thing—flung herself back with one arm over her eyes, the other hanging from the couch as though in the relaxation of sleep. She heard Rose laugh softly from the doorway.

"Come and look at her," she whispered. "I don't blame you, Evvy!"

"Blame me for what?" asked Eveleth, coolly.

"Well, let us say for knowing a delightful girl when you see her." They drew away, leaving the door half open. "I haven't the heart to wake her. You will have to put up with me for awhile."

"You are very good to put up with me—I who have neither coaches nor yachts nor orchids."

"But you can make me laugh, Evvy." A curious softness, half mischievous, had crept into Rose's voice.

"You can make me cry, Rose!" From under her arm Judy could see them, standing facing each other, Rose leaning against the back of a chair. There was a tension in the air that made her heart beat heavily.

"Then you do still like me a little, even though your heart is given elsewhere?" Rose asked, pensively.

"Even though I have been cut out by a prosperous rival."

She hesitated, her eyes on her slipper. "It may amuse you to know, Evvy," she said finally, with an affectation of shyness, "that I—I got rid of Mr. Kellogg day before yesterday. Orchids are all very well, but, oh, he did bore me!" She lifted her eyes, and the laughter left them as they met his.

"Rose!" He put his hands on her arms. Hers were doubled against her breast. Her lips were half parted,

her head was thrown back from her soft throat. "Oh, my Rose, truly?" It was a new voice, sharp and vibrating. His hands crept up to her shoulders, then drew her into his arms. It seemed an eternity before his face was lifted from hers. Then he threw back his head with a quick laugh.

"Oh, Rose, it has been a devil of a week!"

"It has!" she agreed. She was still in his arms, her cheek against his coat. "I thought you were frightfully in love with Judy."

"I hoped you would."

"Meanness!"

"You deserved it, bad girl. Oh, Rose, my beloved!" He swept her up close against him. "How could you hurt me so?" She tipped back her head that he might reach her lips, but he kissed her throat first.

"Ah, there's no one like you, Evvy, no one, no one—I can't do without you!" she said, breathlessly.

He drew her away to a couch at the other end of the room. Their voices came dimly, with occasional laughter and long silences. And Judy lay with her fairy-tale in tatters, too desolate for tears. When both rooms were dark she summoned her courage and stood up with obvious rustling. Rose called to her, teasingly.

"Be a sport!" she warned herself, and laughed with them over her unexpected nap.

"Don't run away," urged Rose. Her eyes were big and luminous in the half-light, her cheeks flushed. She was so beautiful that all Judy's hot resentment died down. How could anyone not love her! Eveleth, kindly and silent in the background, shed a disarming cordiality. Judy went away feeling very little and lost.

"It wasn't their fault," she told herself. "I didn't know what love was, that was all. He was only kind and friendly. Love is something different." The memory of his voice, quick, almost rough, made her catch her breath. There was no healing left for her in "Good night, Judy San." That was what one said to a dear child.

XIII

It seemed strange to have no occupation in the morning; stranger still to have no dreams. Judy took Eveleth's picture from the wall and did it up with her manuscript, placing both in the bottom of her trunk. No reviving hope came to suggest that her critics had been wrong about the play; some instinct told her their judgment was true. It seemed now as though she had known it all along—that her inspiration was only enthusiasm and a jumble of other people's ideas; as though she had consciously pretended to titles that were not lawfully hers. Neither artistic success nor the love of men like Eveleth was for ignorant country girls. They were only "the kind that gets hurt."

"I want to go home!" she cried, suddenly. Then she set her teeth and scowled. "Oh, be a sport!" she commanded.

It took all her courage to enter the theatre that night. She had waited until the last moment, when Rose would be on the stage, and intended to slip away immediately after her performance; but Nance was waiting for her with a note.

"Don't run away," she read. "Supper later—my party—must have you. Rose." And she ended by staying, chiefly because going back to her dismal little room seemed just then worse than any ordeal she might have to face.

There was no need of feigning good spirits, for Rose was too madly gay to be discerning. She came in with a rush, seeming to fill the room to the very corners with a tangible current of vitality.

"I've got them to-night, Nance—they're standing on their heads for me!" she cried. "And I'm going to keep them, too. There'll be five curtain calls after this act. You'll see! Oh, they can call it a flabby, weak-kneed play if they like, but if we can only get them into the theatre, I can keep them!"

"You'll keep 'em waiting if you don't let me dress you," grumbled Nance.

Rose frankly made a face at her, but submitted.

"Do you know what is going to happen at the supper to-night, little California?" she went on, presently, her head and arms emerging vigorously from a seething mass of white frills that proved to be a petticoat. "I can't tell you about it yet, but somebody's engagement is going to be announced—somebody you know."

It seemed to Judy as though her heart dropped like a stone; but pride helped her to look up with a smile.

"I think I can guess whose," she said brightly.

"No, you can't—you mustn't, you mustn't!" Rose's hands were flapping the air, her symbol of desperate excitement. "It is to be a surprise. Promise you'll be surprised!"

"Surprised to death," agreed Judy.

"Belle is coming, and everybody. Oh, Nance, do stop fussing—I *am* standing still. Only it's such a beautiful world, I have to be noisy." She gave the old woman a tempestuous embrace. "Do you think I am 'no end of a goat,' Judy California?" she asked, with her deeply curved smile.

Judy got up impetuously and under pretense of straightening an end of lace, put her arm for a moment about Rose's shoulders.

"I think you are splendid. I am glad you're happy," she said, jerkily, with averted eyes.

Rose patted her hands. "God bless little Judy and make her a good girl," she laughed caressingly. "Now, Nance, am I all together? I must fly."

The room seemed suddenly small and dull when she had swept out. Judy waited apathetically, finding herself suddenly too unutterably tired for further feeling. Nance, who was picking up scattered garments, glanced at her keenly once or twice.

"Headache, Miss Kent?" she asked, finally.

"Oh, no. My head never aches." Judy roused herself to smile. "Nance," she went on presently, "if Miss Rose were to—marry, she wouldn't leave the stage, would she?"

"Miss Rose won't never marry," said Nance, with decision. "She likes her work too well for that. What'd she do with a husband around under foot and babies spoilin' her looks? No, Miss Rose ain't one to marry."

"She doesn't know," thought Judy, and relapsed into silence.

The supper was in a glass bird-cage hung with green vines, conventionally known as a palm room. The others were already there when they arrived, Polly's pink face over a flaring tulle bow suggesting the bodiless cherubs of the old masters; Mrs. Froley tightly swathed and glittering in expensive disregard of the bouffant draperies of the season; Lord Merrington serene, satisfied, apparently not an inch nearer to or farther from the ultimate subjection demanded of him; Simeon Knowles very beaming and giving an intangible effect of being much dressed up; and Eveleth looking on through his single eye-glass, kindly and apparently unperturbed. Judy felt a pang of loss that the glory of associating with them had been so tarnished. She was conscious of hoping that they would not be too conspicuously noisy as she found her place at the round table reserved for them.

To her it was an interminable supper. Rose prolonged it as much as possible, and many a meaningful glance passed between her and Polly, who was evidently in the secret. Simeon seemed to feel the excitement, too, but Eveleth looked on with his fine calm, evidently not in the least nervous at the coming announcement. He talked to Judy in a friendly but abstracted fashion; she felt that though his face was toward her, his spirit was wholly turned to Rose on the other side. He knew, without looking, when Rose's napkin slipped from her lap. As he stooped for it, Judy saw his cheek touch her knee for a second. Rose turned to him instantly.

"Happy, Evvy? Having a good time?" she said in a quick little half voice. If he answered in words, they were too low for anyone else to hear.

"Will it never be over!" thought

Judy, desperately. Every time there was a pause her hands turned icy cold and she nerved herself for the ordeal, but it was not until the supper was nearly over and the other tables were empty that Rose tapped for silence and impressively raised a glass of champagne.

"There is a new toast for you to drink to-night," she began. "A brand-new engagement, one you will all be very glad about, I know, because it means the happiness of two people who—oh, Polly, you do the rest!"

Polly rose slowly and so did Simeon. They took hands and smiled foolishly.

"Well, it's just that I am going to marry Simmy," said Polly, and sat down abruptly amid general excitement. They threw her the flowers that decorated the table, they drank to her sitting, they drank to her standing, to the deep interest of the waiters. And through all the babel Judy was conscious only of breathlessness and a vast relief. At least she need not face it yet; perhaps it would not be so hard when Rose was ready to tell. The reaction from suspense brought an excitement that was very like high spirits.

"Now all give me the inevitable advice and get it over with," said Polly, when they had subsided. "Belle, you are the only one present known to be married; you shall have first turn. What is your advice to a young woman about to enter the wedded state?" Mrs. Froley's black eyelashes drooped; the thin scarlet line of her mobile lips took a cynical curve.

"Learn solitaire," she said, drily. Of course, they shouted. Belle was always sure of her laugh.

"Oh, dear, I don't like it," Polly protested. "You can keep your old advice. If Simmy isn't absolutely devoted every moment we're off the stage, I'll know the reason!"

"But he will be," they said in chorus, with an effect of having rehearsed it, while Simmy's plump cheeks dimpled absurdly under his twinkling black-currant eyes.

"Well, he'd *better*," Polly said. Then she smiled confidentially at

them all. "Isn't it fun? If I had known it was so nice, I'd have done it long ago."

"But I didn't ask you long ago," Simeon objected.

"Oh, no—but with somebody else," said Polly, placidly. "I am glad I'm not such a great artiste that my career won't let me marry. Rose, honest! Don't you wish you were a little scrub like me, and could get engaged and marry and take a flat and have a wedding-ring and a—and all sorts of things? Stop laughing, all you! I am serious. Truly, Rose, doesn't your greatness look sort of cold and thin beside being—Mrs. Simmy?"

Judy glanced sharply at Rose, but her face showed only amusement.

"But since I couldn't be Mrs. Simmy anyway—" she began. "No, marriage isn't for me, my child. I love my freedom too well."

Eveleth's face showed no more self-consciousness than hers.

"How they can act!" was Judy's wondering thought.

When they rose, a little later, she made her way to Polly and took her hand.

"I am awfully glad for you, you know," she said, with her direct smile. "I envy you, even if Rose pretends she doesn't."

"You're a nice girl," Polly squeezed the firm brown hand in both her little soft white paws. "But Rose isn't pretending, you know. She hasn't any use for matrimony, and I'm glad of it. Her career is too big a thing to monkey with."

"But some day she will care a lot," Judy ventured. "And then—" Polly shot an odd glance at her.

"Oh, yes, Rose might—care," she assented, vaguely, and edged away from the topic.

"Nobody knows yet—nobody but me," thought Judy, as she said good night.

XIV

A GOOD-BYE note from Meldrum, written on the train, seemed to Judy

like a door shut in her face. It was courteous, considerate, full of good wishes; but the old cordiality of spirit was gone. Remembering how she had met his advances, she could not blame him; but she laid the note in her trunk beside the manuscript and the picture with a sense of having lost the best friendship of her life.

"Everything is leaving me—everything," she muttered, dropping the lid. Tears rolled down her cheeks, but she struck them away. "What's the use of crying? What's the use? what's the *use*?" she insisted, setting her teeth.

Since her work had been taken from her all the charm had gone from her room, leaving it just the dreary hole it was. Judy spent as little time there as possible. After a day or two of aimless wandering she took herself firmly in hand and began to look for work—work whereby she might earn enough to take her home. Admitting defeat seemed a comparatively small trial now; and a room with five windows had suddenly come to have a new meaning. Even teaching in the valley school did not look like such a bitter fate, when one could live with open fires, and have a horse to ride, and escape to the mountains or the woods between-times.

"I don't believe I am so very much in love with Broadway," she said, with a smile that tried to be cynical but was only rather forlorn.

As the result of a week's search, she secured some circulars to address for a jeweler. There were three thousand of them, and the task took four solid days. She had earned three dollars.

"I really think writing plays would pay better, if one could do it," she decided. Judy was trying to take her lot humorously these days. That harmonized with her ingrained idea of being "a sport." She put the money into an envelope on which she printed in neat, square characters, "This way for the West-bound Limited." Then she went to play her small part in the Saturday matinée. Her bearing was still gallant.

"Considering I have a broken heart and a blighted ambition, I am doing pretty well," she told herself, with a smile into a chance mirror. She needed all her bravado for her daily meetings with Rose and Eveleth. They had offered no confidences, but it amazed her that all the world did not see what she saw in every glance they exchanged. Rose was so gloriously gay, it was impossible to grudge her anything that was hers.

They were always unfailingly, if carelessly, kind to Judy. When she left the theatre late that afternoon, Eveleth joined her and walked down the street beside her.

"How is the young playwright?" he asked.

"Dead and buried," she answered, glad of the early darkness that veiled a shamed flush.

"Dear me! How did it happen?"

"Well, I have found another field for my talents, one where they promise to accomplish more," she said, with a grim memory of the circulars. "I feel I shall reach a bigger audience in my new work."

"Ah! you are doing stories—a novel?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Not exactly. But it is a secret; I shall not give you a hint until I become famous at it."

"I fancy that won't be long to wait." He smiled down at her delightfully. "Tell me this much—it is writing of some sort?"

"Yes, it is," she admitted, stretching her cramped fingers, which still ached from clutching the pen. "Oh, it's writing!"

"I shall perish of curiosity," he said, in his most tranquil tones. "You might tell me, you know; I have no secrets from you."

"No?" The bravado even enabled her to lift a mischievous glance at him. The glance she met was disturbing; it seemed to her, for the instant, both startled and unfriendly.

"None, I assure you," he answered, suavely.

Judy, in anguish at having seemed to rush in, caught at any way out.

"Then Rose didn't tell the truth," she said, guilelessly. "She told me you had once written a play yourself, and that it had been put on in London."

He laughed, evidently relieved. "But that was not a secret—though I wished that it had been when I saw the press notices. It ran three weeks—limped, rather, and staggered, and finally fell dead, to every one's vast relief."

"Didn't you feel cut up about it?"

"I dare say, though I have quite forgotten. One doesn't remember one's sorrows of ten years back."

"Really?" Her voice was wistful. "How long do they last, then—broken hearts and things?"

"I should say from three weeks to—at most—a year and a half."

She shook her head. "Not in California, I'm afraid. It takes us longer. We—" She broke off abruptly. "What is it?" she exclaimed.

They had turned into a side street, for the moment nearly deserted, and under a lamp was a struggling group. It proved to be a hulking great boy grappling with one half his size and pounding him unmercifully. She turned to Eveleth, sick with rage.

"Oh, come quick—make him stop!" she exclaimed.

He put his hand on her arm and drew her toward the other side of the street. "Better not get mixed up in it," he suggested, his eyebrows drawn up in distaste for the scene. The big boy delivered a vicious kick and the child screamed. Judy wrenched her arm away.

"You're not going to let that go on!" she cried, her eyes blazing with anger. Eveleth's expression was bored, annoyed; but in a flash of intuition she understood the incredible truth. She could not put it into words that he was afraid; it was too shameful. But her shocked eyes could not be ignored.

"My dear Miss Kent, I am not for taking part in street rows," he said, irritably. "I will call a policeman—if you wish to take charge of the case." And he turned back to the corner.

She let him go without a word. Then she went quickly toward the struggle.

"Here, you stop that!" she said, sharply, and there was a fire in her eyes and voice that made the fellow hesitate. "Let that child go at once, you great brute!" she stormed. "Aren't you ashamed—a little fellow like that!"

The boy began a loud defense. "Well, I don't care, he——"

"Never mind what he did," she cut in. "Don't you ever touch him again as long as you live. I should think—" But her audience had vanished, the sobbing victim scuttling off quite as fast as his assailant. A figure in uniform was coming down the block. Judy could see a long, slim shape following, but she slipped across the street and out of sight as fast as her trembling knees could carry her. All her outraged traditions were crying shame upon Eveleth; she did not feel that she could ever look him in the face again. The sure knowledge of how Johnny would have disposed of the situation made her catch her breath and clench her hands in helpless rage. And she had believed that her heart was broken because of this thing, this bloodless automaton who was afraid of a hulking boy and unmoved by a human outrage; who went for a policeman when the moment called for masculine dominance.

"Oh, I want a man, a *man*!" she cried in her heart. The last shred of the fairy-tale had vanished. She stood hurt, humiliated, infinitely sore-hearted, but once more free and whole. Her simple code made no allowances; Eveleth's charm could never touch her again. She took his picture from her trunk and tore it into shreds.

"There's an end to that," she said, throwing the bits viciously into the waste-basket. "Rose is a thousand times too good for him. Well, I've got her left, anyway—Rose and my salary. Everything else is gone." Then her eyes glowered again. "Wouldn't Johnny have settled that boy!" she muttered.

XV

ACCORDING to her traditions, the disgraced Eveleth would do everything in his power to avoid meeting Judy till time had softened the affair, and she made it easy for him by staying in the theatre only long enough for her performance, the next few nights. She did not forgive him what she uncompromisingly called his cowardice, but she grew cool enough to wonder over the occurrence; for a certain human kindness had always seemed to her Eveleth's dominant trait. He had certainly been very good to her when she was troubled.

"But, after all, it was only in words and manner; he never had to do anything unpleasant or anything that took courage," she reflected. She realized, too, that it had not been right to make love to her for Rose's benefit. "He happens to have a kind surface; he likes to be kind when it is easy and pretty; but he never thinks of one thing but self, self," she decided, hotly.

A friendly note from Rose, demanding to know what had become of her, took her up to the apartment late one afternoon. She had not been there since that cruelly enlightening Sunday. Rose had not mentioned the play since, having evidently quite forgotten it, to Judy's deep relief. This afternoon she was lounging in an elaborate tea-gown of white lace, fresh from a bath and a horseback ride, a little subdued, for her, but not less lovely on that account. Judy looked down enviously on her lazy contentedness.

"All you need is a deep purr," she said, dropping on the floor beside the couch.

"I'm no cat," Rose protested, gently pulling her hair. "What's the news? Did you know that Polly and Jimmy are to be married next month?"

"Lucky children," said Judy, idly.

"Oh, yes! Polly might as well marry, if she wants to." Rose yawned. "But fancy wanting to!"

Judy glanced up at her shrewdly. "You can't fancy wanting to?" she asked.

"Me? Oh, never! Oh, I should say not!" If this were acting, it was remarkably well done.

"But Rose," Judy ventured, "suppose you cared tremendously some day?—and you might, you know."

"Oh, well, even then I think my work would come first," said Rose, rather vaguely, her eyes fixed on the tip of her beaded-bronze slipper. "Besides, I couldn't stand being tied to anyone; I'd hate him in—" She broke off to call, "Come!" to a knock. Judy flushed as Eveleth entered, and started to scramble to her feet.

"Don't get up," he protested, evidently not in the least disturbed by the encounter. "Why, I haven't seen you since our street fight," he added, as he took her hand. "Where have you hidden yourself?"

"Street fight?" Rose demanded.

"Indeed, yes," he said, balancing on the arm of a chair and smiling at them both impartially. "We came upon a young giant thrashing a boy last Saturday, and Miss Kent wanted me to dash in and thrash the giant, who could have made mincemeat of me in three seconds."

"Good press-agent story, though," Rose suggested.

"Yes; but I did not see myself spending the next three weeks in a hospital. So I went back for a policeman—I even hurried."

"And what did Judy do?" Rose asked, mildly amused. Judy was smiling bravely over anger and disgust.

"Oh, she whirled in and beat the big boy herself, in true California fashion, and then she marched him off to jail and the little boy to a hospital, so when we arrived there was no one to rescue. It was rather flat, for us. Aren't you looking rather grand to-day?"

"Indeed I am; this is my new tea-gown. Judy, you haven't admired it yet."

"But I have been staring my eyes out ever since I came," Judy protested. "I know now what they mean by a 'confection.'"

"I have a grander one yet, just home to-day. Go and look at it in my closet. Nance will show you if you can't find it."

Judy went obediently to Rose's bedroom, where Nance was sewing by the window, and opened a closet door.

"Miss Rose wanted me to see her new tea-gown," she began, peering into the closet depths; then she stopped with a quick breath, the door-knob still in her hand. The color had left her face. What she saw hanging there inside was nothing of Rose's—

"Oh, not that closet, honey—this one over here," Nance exclaimed, rising abruptly. "We just keep any old truck in that closet." She shut the door and drew Judy to the other. "See, here is the new gown; ain't it a beauty? My, Miss Rose spent a fortune on it."

"It's — very handsome;" Judy stared at it blindly. "Thank you, Nance. Yes, it's lovely. Now I must go." She went mechanically through with her good-byes in the other room, her eyes averted, her cheeks suddenly burning. Once outside, she buried her face in her hands for a moment. Everything was clear to her now, horribly clear. No doubt, anyone but an ignorant country girl would have understood long ago. She must not be a prude, she must not judge puritanically, but—

"Oh, I want to go home! I don't like it!" she gasped. The shame of what she had seen clung to her through the streets and up to her own room. Her mind tried loyally to explain and excuse, but her little-girl heart seemed hurt beyond healing by this first encounter with realities.

"Johnny isn't like that," was her passionate thought. A new sense of the big security of his devotion made her turn longingly to the thought of him.

"I supposed that the world was full of men like Johnny—that I'd find them on every corner," she said, humbly. "Oh, I don't believe there is anybody like him! And I've thrown him away." She leaned out of the window into the cold darkness, her

eyes toward the west. "You might write to a fellow, Johnny," she murmured.

In the morning Judy got up to two thousand more circulars. Two thousand circulars to be addressed make a discouragingly big pile, especially when the pay is a dollar a thousand. Her thoughts would not stay on the work, and betrayed her into blunders. Finally she dropped her pen and went to kneel before the window with her arms on the ledge, staring into the rear walls opposite. Her eyes were hurt and bewildered.

"Oh, Rose, Rose!" she whispered, against her arm.

She was still there at noon when a knock was followed by the appearance of Nance in the doorway. Judy flushed, but the old woman entered tranquilly and shut the door.

"Mornin', Miss Kent. Note for you from Miss Rose," she announced.

Judy took it, glad of an excuse to lower her eyes. When she had read it, she looked up with rather a grim smile.

"Well, Nance, so they are going to take off the play this week," she said. "There goes my job!"

Nance was looking with pursed lips at the circulars.

"Beats me why you'd ruther stay in New York, you young ladies that comes from comfortable homes," she said.

"But, Nance, it takes money to get back to those comfortable homes," Judy said, involuntarily.

Nance glanced at her keenly, but she still grumbled. "Bet you wouldn't go back if you had a pocket full of money."

The glance had put Judy on her guard. "Oh, I might," she said, lightly. "I dare say I shall before long."

Nance was evidently not convinced. "See here, honey" — she spoke with kindly gruffness—"I got a lot of money laid by. If you want to borrow any, you just say so and take your own time 'bout payin'. Lord! I can spare it."

"Nance, you're an old darling!" Judy squeezed her hand. "I won't forget."

"Well, I mean it, Miss Kent." Nance kept her hand and began patting it. "And, look here, honey," she went on; "there's things in the world li'l' girls like you don't just understand—and you take 'em too hard. Miss Rose is a great artiste, and you got to remember that; great artistes ain't just like ordinary folks. And she's the sweetest, kindest, lovingest heart in the whole world. There ain't one mean or ugly thing about her, and accordin' to the way she sees things, she's *good*. Now I want you to remember that. You can't understand yet, maybe, but you just believe old Nance. She knows a heap. And don't you worry."

Judy smiled tremulously, though she could not speak, and the old woman went away leaving a measure of comfort behind, in spite of the bad news she had brought. All day the words kept repeating themselves, a steady undercurrent to her troubled thoughts, "You can't understand yet—just believe old Nance;" and at last she yielded to them.

"There's things li'l' girls like me don't just understand," she admitted, with a deep sigh that was partly relief. Her shrinking from seeing Rose changed to a sudden longing for her—kind, beautiful Rose, with her warm heart and her vivid brown eyes. The constraint she had dreaded turned to shy eagerness as she knocked at the dressing-room door that night.

Nance and Rose had been talking about her.

"See here, Miss Rose," Nance had begun, abruptly. "I suspect takin' off the play is goin' to be kinder hard on Miss Kent."

"Why?" asked Rose, absently.

"Well, I don't believe she's got much of anything else to live on."

Rose looked up from the mirror in surprise. "Oh, yes, she has, Nance. She is writing—stories or something; she told Mr. Eveleth so. I don't believe she is poor, anyway—she has good tailor-made clothes."

"Well, she lives mighty poor, I can tell you," Nance persisted; and then Judy herself came in. Rose held out her hand and smiled at her inquiringly.

"You look pale, Judy California," she said. "I'm afraid you are beginning to pine for your native mountains."

"I'm afraid I am," said Judy, holding the soft hand tight for a moment.

"Then I suppose we've got to let you go?"

"Well, not just yet." She turned away with a smile. "I have some work to finish," she added, with a vision of the two thousand circulars.

"Good-paying work, my child?"

"Oh, I shall earn far more by it than I ever should by play writing," said Judy, bravely; and Rose shot a relieved glance at Nance, who nodded reluctantly, with pursed lips.

"I am glad you're getting rich," Rose said. "If ever you are up against it, my dear, you know you are to come to me, or there will be trouble between us!" She laid her hand on Judy's shoulder, and the girl turned to her impetuously.

"I still have you—whatever else goes, I have you," she whispered.

Rose laughed and drew her close for a moment, not troubling to understand. "You funny child!" she said, caressingly.

On Monday morning Judy started out to find work, her purse full of newspaper clippings, her head well up.

"There must be work for energetic young women, even if they can't sing for their supper," she said, decidedly. "You'll admit that, Johnny!" Lately she had fallen into a way of addressing most of her thoughts to Johnny.

XVI

MELDRUM left New York with a clear sense that he was not wanted. The pain of it dominated every other feeling as his train rushed up the Hudson, and he wrote his good-bye letter. It was not less clear when he reached Chicago, twenty-four hours later, but it no longer

dominated; anxiety for Judy's welfare was again in possession. He winced at the memory of that dreary block, still more at something that the street light had shown in her face when he had asked if there was anyone else. What was she facing, alone by herself in that abominable city with no one to look after her? He was not wanted, of course; but if he could keep an eye on her without her knowing it—why, then, if anything happened, he would be there. The logic of this seemed to him so conclusive that he took the first train back from Chicago to New York.

He had no intention of disclosing his presence to Judy, who had dismissed him so uncompromisingly. Yet how to look after her invisibly was a difficult problem. He settled it at last by going down to her lodging when he knew she would be at the theatre, and boldly ringing the bell. As he had hoped, the same kind Irish face appeared in the doorway, and with as few words as possible Johnny set forth the situation, frankly asking for coöperation. He called himself Judy's cousin—that was his one subterfuge; but as Lizzie did not for a moment believe him, there was no deception.

"I want you to meet me as often as you can and tell me how she seems and what she is doing, and to come to me at once if she is in any trouble; but not to let her know," he repeated, when the girl had grasped the situation, and he put five dollars in California gold into her moist palm. Whereupon Lizzie was heart and soul for his cause. He went away somewhat ashamed, but philosophical. Whatever the means, he had to know.

And so in the dull weeks that followed Johnny knew that the play writing had stopped, and about the circulars, and when the theatre engagement ended; he knew that extracts were cut from the employment columns of the papers, with long hours of absence ensuing and weary returns; he followed her brief career as a private secretary and watched over her hours of reading aloud to an invalid. He knew her days of brisk courage and her days of

black depression. He knew what she had for her breakfast and when she did not have any luncheon, and his heart nearly broke to take her and care for her; but still he waited. It was a dreadful time to him, cooped in a hotel room, his whole being rebelling at its cramped conditions while he smoked and scowled at the walls.

Lizzie met him on Third avenue every other day with her report, and her wardrobe blossomed as the rose under his liberality. There was one terrible week when Judy even gave up the dairy dinners, and Meldrum ate his own meals with self-loathing; then came a time of high prosperity, with regular employment in a publishing house, and Meldrum's heart sank even more dismally, seeing her slipping away from the need of him. For Lizzie, naturally, could not tell him of the inner change that had happened since Judy had so summarily sent him away. He saw her as still brimming with enthusiasm, still proudly independent, not wanting him. In his misery and homesickness he was at last almost on the point of giving up and going back. Then the regular work ended, and he knew that Judy had cried—his sturdy, fearless Judy; cried for a long time, so that her eyes were "just turrible," though she had tried to keep her face averted when Lizzie went in with towels. Meldrum's hands clenched with helpless rage.

"My God, I can't stand this!" he muttered. After a sleepless night he took an early cup of coffee and started resolutely down-town. It was only half-past seven when he left his hotel.

Judy herself was up before seven that morning. She prepared some breakfast and forced herself to eat it, though it was hateful to her. Then she dressed carefully, with a contemptuous glance for the pale, dismayed face in the mirror.

"Oh, you *are* a sport," she commented, but her spirit refused to answer to the spur. It was snowing, with a cold wind, and she folded a newspaper into the front of her Fall

jacket for extra warmth. At a quarter of eight she went down the stairs, her bearing still faintly gallant.

"The downfall of the house of Kent," she murmured, with a smile for Lizzie sweeping the hall. Lizzie had shown a kindly interest in her fortunes of late.

The wind seemed to rush through her as she struggled down the front steps. "If I were small enough, I could do the frozen-newsboy act," she thought, still clinging to her flippancy. "Then they'd be sorry." It occurred to her to wonder who would be sorry. Rose—still her dear, big, beautiful Rose, who would help if she knew, but who must not know—was too absorbed in her own life to be sorry long about anything. Eveleth would not care. Johnny—oh, yes, Johnny would be sorry. He might be cold and unfriendly now, he might have completely forgotten her existence; but he would care if she died.

"Wish I could die then and make him sorry," she muttered, vindictively, but with trembling lips. Death, on the whole, seemed to her preferable to the experience before her. But she must eat; and a saleswoman—no, saleslady—earns five dollars a week.

The sidewalk was still uncleared and the snow clung heavily to her skirt. The wind, swirling about the corner, dashed her umbrella from her, sending it torn and broken into the street.

"Well, go, then," she muttered, one cold hand clinging to her hat, the other clutching her skirts. The gale tore her veil loose and her hair whipped her cheeks and blinded her. She started to cross the street, but a warning shout made her dodge back just in time, with a shaft brushing her shoulder; a hansom was almost on top of her. She put her hand on a lamp-post and stood trembling and unnerved, but the hansom did not pass on. Some one seemed to be springing down from it, some one very big and strong and cruelly like Johnny. Nobody had any right to be so much like Johnny. It was too much for anyone to bear. He seemed to want to apologize, or

something. She looked up wearily, without a tremor to warn her. Johnny was looking down at her with tears in his eyes.

"Oh, Judy, my girl!" he cried. "I can't stand it another minute. I have to help!"

"Johnny!" She clutched his coat with her cold hands. "Oh, Johnny, don't go away!" They forgot the snow for a moment; then he put his arm strongly about her and lifted her into the hansom.

"Anywhere," he said to the driver, and the window closed on them with its screen of snow.

"I don't know whether you're real, or if I'm just making it up," Judy faltered, though the hand on hers felt real enough.

"Never mind about that," he said, a little incoherently. "I'm here and you're here, and you are not going to get away again. My dear!" he added, impulsively.

Her eyes fell. "But I'll be late," she said, demurely; "and they fine you when you are late."

"Where?" he demanded.

"I am to begin at the ribbon counter, but if I'm bright I may get promoted to the gentlemen's gloves—because I'm a good-looker. They always put good-lookers at the gentlemen's gloves." Judy's innocent tone echoed that of her saleslady informant. Johnny swore in sudden exasperation, which made her laugh, and then quite unexpectedly she found her eyes wet.

"There is to be no more nonsense," he decreed. "You are going home with me at once—to-morrow, and you are going to—" He saw the tears on her cheek, and stopped in dismay. "Judy, what is it? Am I distressing you? Aren't you ready to—come home with me?" His voice implied everything, but she only crept closer.

"I have been ready for weeks," she whispered. Then she laughed softly. "Now where's your reserved little cuss?"

"Just where I want her! Then there wasn't anyone else?" he added.

"Oh, he didn't matter," she said,

dreamily. "He only taught me that one has to love some one; I didn't know that before. And then, when I had found it out, I knew of course that I'd have to love you. We belong to the same things, you and I."

"I could have taught you all that," he said, jealously.

She shook her head. "No; I had to get hurt, to learn. Never mind. We are here now. Ah, I'm glad you're a big, live *man!*" she added, impulsively. Presently a smile curled her eyes. "It's cold on the trail to-day,

isn't it?" she said. "We shall have to build a fire when we dismount, Johnny."

"So much the better—we'll broil some bacon," he answered; "and we'll have our coffee hot. I've got my tackle—shall I try for a trout when we strike the creek?"

They laughed together.

"Oh, isn't life good!" she cried. "Johnny, I am starved for that broiled trout!"

"Let's go and get some breakfast," said Johnny, with enthusiasm.



THE TALISMAN

WAKING, in that strange hour before the dawn,
 When Time stands tiptoe, and the step of Death
 Draws, in the silence and the dark, so near
 Its solemn echo on the air we hear,
 When Grief and Loneliness and Loss and Change
 Rise up like specters, menacing and strange,
 And Fear the cowering spirit holds in pawn—
 Waking, I felt my heart grow faint and chill,
 And all my courage fail me, and my breath,
 With heavy presage of Life's certain ill,
 Vague terrors that I knew not how to still,
 And longings for some warmth of comfort near,
 Some human touch amid those shadows drear;
 And then the thought of you upon me came,
 And softly, in the dark, I spoke your name.

The specters paled, the burdened air grew light,
 Peace lifted brooding wings above the night.
 From thought to thought I drifted, quiet, dim,
 Till thoughts grew dreams, and flickered, vaguely bright.
 Then Sleep's cool touch across my eyelids crept,
 And calmly, like a wearied child, I slept,
 Nor woke till birds began their morning hymn,
 The daylight at the window glimmered clear,
 And all the shapes of night had vanished.

Dear,
 In your far chamber, did you wake, and hear?

MARGARET JOHNSON.

TENDER-HEARTED

FIDO sat before the fire
 And, as dogs oft do,
 With his tail upon the hearth-rug,
 Thumped a loud tattoo.

Nell, beside him, crouched and wept
 As if her heart would break;
 Thus I found her, dropping in
 A friendly call to make.

"What is the matter, Nell?" I gasped,
 With apprehension pale.
 She sobbed, "It always makes me cry
 To hear a moving tale."

CAROLINE MISCHKA ROBERTS.



NOT UP-TO-DATE

FATHER—Well, my boy, I don't know of any way to make a living honestly
 except by working for it.

SON—Oh, spruce up, dad, and shake those obsolete ideas of yours.



THESE MODERN CHILDREN

NODD—Are your children making any progress in school?

TODD—Fine! Why, they treat me with more contempt all the time.



THE CITY MISSIONARY—You may not believe it, but I have talked with
 people who knew absolutely nothing about God!

THE SKEPTIC—Slums, or smart set?

CHECKMATE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

MR. STANWICK, the managing director of Messrs. Pawling & Ramsworthy, was a friend of mine, and occasionally helped me to find work for some of those whose reclamation I was attempting. It was therefore with some regret that I stole his valuable collection of stamps in which, as I was aware, he took an immense interest. The circumstances which made this action on my part necessary may be given briefly and will explain exactly how it happened.

Mrs. Gimbrell, the wife of a criminal of low intelligence, had been given work by Pawling & Ramsworthy. I guaranteed the cost of materials entrusted to her. She had a cousin, Mrs. Sanders, a widow who in the rare intervals of her intoxication had seemed to me to show abilities of a rather unusual order. She could draw and design fairly well. Naturally her bad habits prevented her from getting regular work and kept her in a condition of the most miserable poverty. Mrs. Gimbrell had a very proper desire to persuade her cousin to lead a new life, and consulted me on the subject.

"Fust, she drinks because she ain't got nothing else to do; and then she ain't got nothing else to do because she drinks. And that's how it is. Goes on and on like. But she's a woman as might make a good living twenty different ways. So far as cleverness of the head goes I don't know that I wouldn't put her before myself."

"And what," I asked, "do you think we could do?"

"Well, it's this wye. If I were to

come to her with work in my hand and say, 'Now then, Gladys, you take and do this and you'll be well paid for it, and there's plenty more where that came from so long as you keep sober,' then that'd be talking."

I promised her that I would do what I could, and I took some specimens of her drawings to show to my friend, Mr. Stanwick. As it happened, his firm was making at that time rather a specialty of water-color drawings of dresses. Customers could look through the portfolio and find the kind of thing that they wanted. The firm found this a very satisfactory way of dealing with some of their best exclusive ideas. A model in a window or show-room is easily seen, remembered, and copied by a clever dress-maker. The portfolio was shown only to customers with whom the firm was acquainted. He agreed to give Gladys Sanders a trial, and I guaranteed the firm against any loss due to her for a space of one month. During that month she did admirably, showed great resource and produced several novelties out of which the firm made a good profit. They kept her on but they did not renew the guarantee. This may have been carelessness—Stanwick himself said it was an oversight—but I think myself that they had been convinced too readily of the woman's honesty and ability and did not think the guarantee necessary. She was well paid, had no one but herself to support and was now infinitely better off than her cousin, Mrs. Gimbrell, who had befriended her.

There was no excuse whatever for what she did. I am sorry to say that she took sketches of the whole of Messrs. Pawling & Ramsworthy's Spring novelties and sold them to an unscrupulous opposition establishment.

Naturally, Stanwick was furious and sent for me. I offered there and then to make good the money loss, so far as it could be calculated, that the firm had incurred, although I was not legally bound to do anything of the kind. Stanwick would not hear of it. He said he did not want my money. He simply stamped up and down the room, saying that it was the last time he would do anything for my damned East-Enders, and that he would employ respectable people in future. He expressed delight that Mrs. Sanders was in prison and hoped that she would drink herself to death as soon as she came out. I begged him to moderate his language, but it is of little use to argue with an angry man. Out of sheer spite and vindictiveness he stopped giving any further work to Mrs. Gimbrell, though the firm had always found her honest and skilful and were in her case fully protected by my guarantee.

The work was not essential to Mrs. Gimbrell. Alfred had now got a post as night-watchman, and the family could have lived on what he made. But undoubtedly the money that Mrs. Gimbrell earned was very useful to them. They had a large family.

I waited for a week to give Stanwick's temper time to cool down and then I called on him again with reference to Mrs. Gimbrell. He was good enough to say that he was always pleased to see me whenever I looked in to have a chat with him, but on the other point he was as obstinate as ever. I saw that if I pressed the subject it would only end in his losing his temper again. So I left, with a sad heart that such cruelty and obstinacy should be possible in the world, and with the decision to steal Mr. Stanwick's collection of postage stamps. Those who will not lend a hand in the

work of reclamation and try to thrust back a poor woman like Mrs. Gimbrell struggling out of the mire, should be punished in a way that they will feel. I was sure that Stanwick would feel the loss of his collection acutely.

Mr. Stanwick lived in a handsome but rather pretentious house on Wimbledon Common. I had frequently dined there and knew the place well. The stamp-collection was kept in the library in an unlocked bookcase. It had been begun by his father and was now being completed by himself. I have known several cases of hereditary philately. He had told me some years before that he would not take fifteen hundred pounds for the collection, and as he was adding to it from time to time I supposed that it would be worth more now.

The system of bolts, locks and burglar alarms in his house was really ingenious. There was hardly a window in the place which could have been easily and safely opened at night by a burglar with a common pocket-knife. There are very few houses of which one can say as much as that. And Stanwick himself always tested the alarms before going to bed.

I did not propose, therefore, to force my admission into Stanwick's house. I always try the easiest way first. There is a convict at present in Portland who spent five hours and a half on one safe, and then discovered that the thing was not locked at all. I selected a night when Stanwick was giving a big dinner-party. At the moment when everybody was most busy I opened the back door, stepped across a passage to the coal-cellar, entered it, shut the door and sat down. Nothing could have been simpler. My only objection was that the waiting was rather tiresome. I had no light and therefore could not read nor write. To occupy my mind I thought out the address which I was to deliver on the following Sunday.

I heard the last carriage drive away and Stanwick's tired servants go up to bed, but it was not till an hour after

that that Stanwick made his rounds. He is really a singularly thorough and careful man. I heard him locking doors, sliding bolts, and testing electric alarms. At last he went up to bed. Ten minutes later I was walking along the road in the direction of Putney with Stanwick's stamp-collection under my arm. A policeman told me that I had missed the last 'bus, but I was lucky enough to find a belated hansom. I went to sleep, well satisfied with my night's work. Stanwick had no right to punish Mrs. Gimbrell for the faults of Mrs. Sanders. It was an act of abominable injustice that made my blood boil.

This, by the way, is the only time in my life that I have taken anything that I did not want. I have not the faintest interest in stamps, and I did not propose to take the bother or run the risk of disposing of the collection.

Three days later I called on Stanwick at his place of business in Oxford street. He seemed to be in the best of spirits and chaffed me about my usual refusal to have a whiskey-and-soda.

"You seem very cheerful, Stanwick," I said. "Anything happened to you?"

"Yes," he said, "something has happened to me. I have had a bit of luck."

"I am very glad to hear it," I said. "Somebody been leaving you money?"

"No; I have had a burglary at my house."

"You don't say so!"

"Fact. Last Wednesday night somebody or other managed to get into the house. How it was done I cannot imagine. The wire of the burglar alarm was cut against one of the library windows, but how the man managed to get in to cut it I can't conceive. The police think he must have been concealed on the premises, but that doesn't seem to me to be likely. Somebody or other would have been certain to have seen him."

It was by the window of the library that I had made my exit after first cutting the wire.

"I see," I said. "So that's your bit of luck? The chap got scared and

left before he had time to take anything?"

"Not a bit of it! That's the queer part of it. I'm in luck because the burglar did take something; he took my collection of stamps."

"I confess that I don't see it. I thought you valued that collection particularly."

"So I did, and it's because I did that I have been so lucky. Some time ago I had an impression that the collection ought to be worth close on two thousand pounds, and I had it specially insured for that amount. Well, one lives and learns. I came to go over some of the finest things in it—things that my father had got, and I didn't like the look of a good many of them. I got in one of the best experts in London and he confirmed my opinion. The poor old chap had been taken in. Collectors were not so scientific in his day as they are now. Nearly all his best things, the things that give a real money value to a collection, were forgeries. If that collection was worth a thousand pounds that is every penny it was worth. It was insured for two thousand, and the insurance people will pay up like lambs. Consequently I am one thousand pounds to the good on that burglary. I shall begin collecting again with a better system of arrangement, and thoroughly enjoy it. As I said to the police, if I could find the man who stole that collection I'd shake him by the hand and thank him. It might be my duty to get him six months afterward, but that's another matter."

I said, and indeed I thought, that this was very extraordinary. I went on chatting with him for about a quarter of an hour and, as I expected, the name of the insurance people slipped out. It was a good, solid company. As I got up to go I said: "Now, Stanwick, may I speak one word to you seriously?"

"You may," he said. "But if it is what I think it is, you will be wasting your time."

"That," I said, "I cannot help. I must do what I believe to be my duty."

I want you to reconsider the case of Mrs. Gimbrell. She had nothing to do with that woman, Sanders's, transgressions, and it is not right or fair that she should be punished for them."

"How am I to know that she had nothing to do with them? The women were cousins, and it's my belief that it was a put-up thing between them. You've been taken in, as you always are. I've been taken in, too, but I don't give the same person the chance to take me in twice."

"I assure you, you are wrong. I have made mistakes, but I've made none about Mrs. Gimbrell. The woman is honest now and is doing her best to make her husband honest. You must take her back."

"Sorry I can't oblige you, Dix, but I won't."

"Remember," I said, "that the unjust and tyrannical are often punished, even in this world."

"I don't know about that. According to you, I was unjust and tyrannical in sacking a woman for combining with another one to swindle my firm. According to you, I ought to have been struck dead, or something in that line. As a matter of fact, a few days later I get this burglary, which suits me down to the ground and puts a thousand pounds in my pocket. Keep that kind of thing for your sermons, Dix. I am a business man and it has no effect with me."

I appeared depressed as I left him, and he told me to cheer up. As soon as I was out in the street I did cheer up. I very seldom laugh, but I smiled as I walked back to my house in Bloomsbury. Undoubtedly it might appear to a superficial observer that I had lost the game. On the contrary, I was absolutely certain that I had won it.

The following day I went down to see Mrs. Gimbrell. She was despondent and inclined to grumble. "What's the good of keeping strife?" she asked. "That's the plain question I'd like you to answer me, Mr. Dix. It seems you get the sack just the same one way as the other, and how am I to get took on anywhere else? I feel like chucking it,

and letting Alf try his hand at the old game again. It mayn't have been right, but there was some money in it while it lasted."

"Mrs. Gimbrell," I said, "this rebellious spirit must be checked, natural though it may be. You would not speak like that if you knew what had happened. Yesterday I had a few words with Mr. Stanwick on your behalf, and I promise you that within a very few days he will send for you and give you again the same work that you had before."

Mrs. Gimbrell was voluble in her thanks. I hope that my reader will not think that I had any intention of deceiving the poor woman. I could see through to the end of the game, and the end of the game was to be checkmate for Mr. Stanwick. He is a man who believes in luck, and I felt sure that when the blow came he would recall my words and change his mind about Mrs. Gimbrell.

On my return to my house I did up the Stanwicks' collection of stamps in a neat parcel, and wrote on it in a large, printed hand, "Taken in error from Hedley Mount, Wimbledon Common, residence of Mr. Algernon Stanwick." I put this under another cover, directed in a similar hand to the insurance company, and took the next train with it to Northampton. From Northampton I sent off my parcel and returned to London again.

A few days later I made it my business to meet Mr. Stanwick as he was going out to luncheon. We lunched together, and he did his best to appear cheerful. He is a man who cannot help bragging of his good luck, but, where possible, keeps his misfortunes to himself, especially if they are of a kind to render him ridiculous. During luncheon he said:

"I am going to put a funny question to you. After you left me the other day, did you make any attempt to discover who it was that took my stamp-collection? I know you are in touch with all these blackguards, and they might tell you things that they wouldn't tell everybody."

"They do," I said. "But I made no such attempt. I never do police work. If I ever tried anything of the kind, my influence for good would be lost at once. Why do you ask?"

"I don't know," he said, meditatively. "I had some sort of wild idea in my head, but there can be nothing in it. Let's talk about something else."

Toward the close of luncheon he said: "By the way, you wanted me to take that Mrs. Gimbrell back again. Do you think she's honest?"

"I am sure she is," I said.

"Yes, but you wouldn't bet on it. Money talks. Would you be prepared to renew your guarantee for as long as she worked for me?"

"Certainly I would, and be glad of the chance."

"Well, then," he said, "next time you see her you can send her up, and I'll see what can be done. I suppose you won't give me any peace till I do take her back."

In this guess of my intentions he was perfectly correct. At the moment of recording this incident Mrs. Gimbrell is still working for the firm, and has had employment from them for the last two years.

Naturally, from the higher point of view I regard all this with great satisfaction. At the same time I must confess that it was certainly not business.



THE ONE HIGHWAY

AYE, lover, would you love with zest,
Win, hold, and hold her fast and well?
Believe, believe the best, the best,
Though she have singed her skirts in hell!
Hold not one doubt, house just this thought—
That she is all in all you sought.

JOAQUIN MILLER



A STUDY

FRIEND—I was surprised to see you coming out of one of those cheap lunch-wagons last night.

SCRIVENER—Ye-es. The—er—the fact is—er—that I was in there—er—studying types, you know.

FRIEND—Well, which type of pie do you prefer?



EDITOR—You say the editor of the advice column is sick?

ASSISTANT—Yes, he took a dose of his own medicine.

AT THE WHARF

I HEAR the pulleys creak, the hawsers strain,
 The strident outcries of the stevedores,
 The boatswain's piping, and I dream of shores
 Beyond the long plunge of the mighty main.
 Soon yon leviathan will dare again
 The weltering deep with wealth of precious stores—
 Man and his handicraft. Already pours
 From the dark funnel smoke of darker stain.

The great screws churn the channel. In the wind
 Flags are a-flutter; kerchiefs, hats and hands
 Wave, and up-leaps a little burst of cheers;
 Hope wings before, and hope reigns high behind,
 Save in the stricken heart of one who stands
 Silent alone, and cannot see for tears.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



HIS QUALITY OF THINKING

MUGGINS—I have made it a habit always to think before I speak.
 DUGGANS—I suppose that accounts for your putting your foot in it so often.



A WOODEN IDOL

MRS. SHARP—That little Mrs. Dubchump is a perfect heathen.
 MRS. KEAN—Yes, I've noticed that she worships that graven image of a husband of hers.



THE CONTRARY SEX

BATES—What do you think is the reason so few women obey their husbands?
 HENPECK—I guess it's because when they married they promised to do so.

THE TURNING OF THE WORM

By Ruth Kimball Gardiner

IT was not until Champe Merivale had tried several other things that Mrs. Beauchamp's suggestion led her to open a shop. Champe belonged to permanent Washington on her mother's side—her grandmother had been a bridesmaid to Miss Williams, who married the Russian Minister—and to temporary Washington on her father's side. Senator Merivale had been so great a man that for a full fortnight after his death editors eagerly accepted the most patently apocryphal anecdotes concerning him. Crowned heads sent messages of sympathy to his daughter, and nearly half the Senate gathered to hear his eulogies read. Then his successor was seated, and the world went on without him. At the end of a year, if you had said the name Merivale, the inevitable query would have been, "What Merivale?"

Champe at twenty was left alone in the world, with a position in old Washington which she had inherited from her mother, and a house in F street, west of the War Department, which she had inherited from her father, and not a penny to support either position or house. Old Washington said she owed it to herself to marry, but unimportant as the bridegroom is at a wedding, it is nevertheless impossible to go on with one without him, and old Washington confessed itself nonplussed. The First Secretary of the Arabian Embassy had shown her marked attention, but even old Washington did not expect a miracle, and Champe had no *dot*. Henry Denby, her father's secretary, plucked up courage to raise his eyes to her, but Champe would not

entertain the idea of accepting in her need the man she had snubbed in her days of plenty. Furthermore, she was full of fine sentiments and high courage, which is only another way of saying that she was twenty and did not know the world.

The afterglow of her father's influence obtained for her a place in one of the Government departments. She was "in office," and for five years, daily, from nine till four, she wrote names, more or less correctly, on cards in the Census Office. Then Mrs. Beauchamp, who was a very great lady by instinct, by inheritance and by virtue of her husband's real estate transactions, suddenly awoke to the fact that Western millionaires should not be allowed to foregather with the elect without paying tribute. Champe was installed as social secretary to Mrs. Yarnell, whose husband had struck oil, or gold, or Government contracts, and for three seasons she did her best to persuade the lady to leave off referring to her husband by his surname alone. At the end of that time, Mrs. Yarnell still considered the iron dog on her front lawn an addition to the landscape, and Mrs. Beauchamp thought of trade as a last resort.

"If you'll only make your shop small enough and your prices large enough," Mrs. Beauchamp remarked, "you'll succeed. I sha'n't bow to anybody who doesn't wear your hats, and I won't be patroness for any bazaar where at least two booths are not furnished by you. Mrs. Yarnell shall buy what she calls 'lingerings' from you—I'm going to tell people she said it—and I'll invite the society reporters to

luncheon the day you hang out your sign. I suppose," Mrs. Beauchamp added, as an afterthought, "you haven't heard from Henry Denby lately?"

Champe blushed.

"Yes, I have," she said.

"Somebody told me he was coming back here," Mrs. Beauchamp went on, thoughtfully. "Isn't he going to be a Senator or a Representative, or whatever it is they begin with?"

"He's been elected to Congress," said Champe.

"One really meets congressmen everywhere these days," said Mrs. Beauchamp. "I think I shall ask him to dinner. I used to know his uncle—the one that bought up something or stole a railroad, or whatever it was he did. It's almost respectable for a man with Henry Denby's money to be in Congress. Is Congress in session now?"

"You dear, absurd thing!" Champe laughed. "Of course it isn't. It never is in October, and don't you worry about Henry Denby. He can take care of himself, and so can I."

"I know you can," Mrs. Beauchamp replied, "and I wish you couldn't. In my day it wasn't considered at all commendable in a girl. I don't like it, but if you don't succeed with that shop, it won't be my fault."

Mrs. Beauchamp was quite as good as her word. At first, people smiled at her persistent touting, but when Mrs. Yarnell ventured to remark that Champe's prices were sheer robbery, and Mrs. Beauchamp, addressing her a moment later, pointedly called her Mrs. Sanders, it was immediately understood that Mrs. Beauchamp was in earnest. The way to her favor thenceforth lay through the white-and-gold doors of the "Trinket Box" in Connecticut avenue. People began to display cards of invitation to a "Trinket Box" opening with the same elaborate carelessness with which they would an invitation to the British Embassy. Society reporters diligently advertised the exclusiveness of the establishment, and before the small capital which was

Champe's from the sale of the Merivale house had been seriously impaired, the "Trinket Box" was a financial success.

Champe was overjoyed; Mrs. Beauchamp was delighted, and Henry Denby was frankly disgusted. He had proposed to Champe semi-annually for five years, and now that his uncle's money made it possible for him to afford a hobby, proposing to Champe had become not a habit, but a violent fad. Refusing him had become a habit with Champe. She had never admitted even to herself that she expected to marry him some day, but she was sure that if she ever did marry him it would not be till she had made an incontestable success. Henry Denby should never be able to say that she married him because there was nothing else for her to do. Henry Denby would never have said it, or even have thought it, but nobody could persuade Champe to believe that, and nobody but Mrs. Beauchamp ever tried to persuade her.

It was all in vain that Mrs. Beauchamp asked Champe to dinner. Champe refused to come when there was any chance that Henry Denby might be there. She was not to be caught by any such palpable device. She lived with a maid in four tiny rooms over the shop, and she pointed out that it would be manifestly improper to receive any visitors when she could not afford a chaperon.

Henry Denby never received any delicately engraved intimations that the "Trinket Box" had something new and unique in handkerchiefs and stocks, but he was finally driven to present himself at the shop. Champe received him with businesslike directness.

"Can I show you anything to-day?" she asked, maliciously.

Henry Denby was a man of resources.

"Yes, you can," he answered. "I want to buy a bonnet for my sister."

"You never had a sister," Champe remarked.

"Did I say sister?" the member of Congress inquired. "How stupid of

me! I meant my ward. I've got dozens of wards, and they are all crying for hats. Show me something suitable for a ward."

"How old is she?" asked Champe, politely.

"I don't think that matters at all," Denby replied. "I should never think of asking the question myself, but commercialism has its blunting effect on the sensibilities. She's an average aged ward, and she wears a medium sized hat."

"How would this do?" Champe asked, displaying a dainty flower toque.

"Is it a bouquet?" Denby inquired.

"No, it's a hat. This is the way it goes on," and Champe perched the airy trifle on her red-brown hair.

"I never saw anything so lovely," said the congressman. "Send me half a dozen of it."

"We never duplicate a model," said Champe, sternly. "It's the only one of its kind in existence."

"Well, there are other kinds," said Denby, cheerfully. "How much is it?"

"Forty-five dollars."

"I call it dirt cheap," said Denby, not a whit disturbed. "I suppose it's made on solid bullion wires, and warranted fast colors. Haven't you something really elegant for about nine hundred dollars?"

Champe laid the hat down.

"Miss May," she called to an assistant, "please wait on this gentleman."

And without another word she marched into the work-room.

Henry Denby was not easily to be discouraged. For two months he visited the "Trinket Box" persistently. Champe was equally determined. Come he might, and buy he might, but not once would she wait on him.

Early in Lent he entered the "Trinket Box" determined to have speech with her in spite of herself. No, Miss May would not do. It was absolutely necessary that he consult the head of the establishment. Champe appeared, armed with her most business-like manner.

"I've come about a very serious

matter—" he began. "How long will it take you to get a trousseau ready?"

"What on earth do you mean?" Champe gasped.

"I understood that you furnished trousseaux when required," Denby went on, gravely. "I want to buy one, that's all."

Champe stared, bewildered.

"Is it for your ward?" she asked, feebly.

"No, it isn't," Denby answered. "Your lovely hats are now household words in every family in my district, but the trousseau is not for my ward. It's for the lady I expect to marry on Wednesday of Easter week at St. John's Church. I shall not attempt to conceal from you the fact that at one time I had other plans for myself, but a love of sordid gain in a lady whom I shall always admire——"

"You're trying to be funny," Champe interrupted.

"I was never more serious in my life," Denby assured her. "I have at last become convinced that for years I've been making a fool of myself, and I'm going to stop. I am engaged to Miss Ivy Gaillard, of my native State, and I am sure you will be the first to congratulate me."

Champe's world whirled before her. She had never dreamed that Henry had it in him to revolt.

"I do congratulate you—with all my heart," she stammered.

"Thank you," said Denby. "I felt sure you would. You see now for whom I want the trousseau. It's a delicate matter, but I feel that I may confide in you. Miss Gaillard is an orphan in reduced circumstances, and following the custom which prevails in certain European countries, I am to provide the trousseau."

"I wonder she accepts it," Champe flashed.

"She doesn't know I am doing it," Denby explained. "She believes that her great-aunt is providing it. Her great-aunt is named Jenks, *née* Smithers, and lives in Brooklyn. She will accompany Miss Gaillard to Washington. We shall be married very quietly,

owing to the recent death of Mrs. Smithers's—I should say Mrs. Jenks's—husband. If you will kindly assist me in the matter of the trousseau, I shall be deeply grateful."

"But if you buy the things here," Champe objected, "they won't fit. Have you Miss Gaillard's measurements?"

"It is necessary to have her measurements?" Denby asked, rather blankly.

"Absolutely," Champe insisted. "We don't provide gowns, but the—the other things have to fit, you know."

Denby looked thoughtful.

"I shall have to ask Mrs. Jenks to obtain them for me at once," he said. "How would you go about getting a young lady measured without her knowledge?"

"I'd find out who her tailor is, or her dressmaker," said Champe. "He'd be sure to have them."

"Thank you," said Denby. "I shall attend to it at once, and since I am entirely at sea in the matter of things you don't provide, can I not persuade you to take the commission of attending to the gowns as well?"

"I did it for one bride," Champe said, reflectively. "I dare say I might, but suppose I chose things that wouldn't be becoming to her?"

"Everything is becoming to her," was Denby's reply. "Without possessing your striking air of self-reliance and independence, Miss Gaillard resembles you greatly. She has very much your coloring, and is about your height. Anything you select will be becoming to her."

Denby went away a little later, leaving Champe more disturbed than she had ever been before in all her life. The incredible had happened. She was as astonished as if the Monument had suddenly begun to do a cake-walk. Henry had actually given her up at last. There could be no mistake about that. He was positively going to marry somebody else, a somebody with the impossible name of Ivy; a somebody who looked like her. That was

the crowning ignominy of it. She said bitter things to herself about the fickleness of men, assured herself that she didn't care the least bit what Henry Denby chose to do, and cried herself to sleep to prove it.

Miss Gaillard's measurements, which her betrothed produced a week later, proved to be Champe's exactly, but Miss Gaillard's photograph, which Denby showed proudly, made Champe so angry that she longed to slap him. She was not vain, but to be told that she looked like that simpering, dowdy picture, was too much to endure. She felt sure Henry was throwing himself away, and she was equally sure it served him right. She set her teeth firmly, and resolved to provide a trousseau that should bewilder the country-bred Mrs. Henry. It would be a subtle revenge, and she assured herself that she did not feel at all revengeful. She wished Henry all manner of happiness, and if he was determined to marry a girl who wouldn't know a coffee-coat from a dressing-sack, it was not her fault.

Denby watched the trousseau develop with delight. He never failed to call daily to ask how it was progressing, and he made a few extra visits to ask Champe's advice about a suitable wedding present for his bride. Long before the outfit was completed, Champe became positively difficult. Miss May declared that one couldn't open one's head to her without having it snapped off short. Champe worked feverishly, and felt that she would give ten years of her life to have the thing over and done with.

Denby's wedding was to be very quiet, indeed. There were no cards, and he had asked less than twenty people to witness the ceremony. The Iberian Minister was to be best man. Miss Gaillard had written that she did not wish a bridesmaid, and as she had no available kinsman, Mr. Beauchamp had been persuaded to give the bride away. Beyond a brief, "Well, it serves you both right," Mrs. Beauchamp had refrained from comment.

Champe thought of a thousand rea-

sons for staying away from the wedding, but her thousand-and-first thought determined her to be present, if it was the last thing she did on earth. Henry Denby should not have the pleasure of thinking she cared a rap how many girls he married. He might marry his entire constituency, for all it mattered to her.

Mrs. Beauchamp sent her carriage bright and early on the day of the wedding, and Champe, in a gown and hat that shamed the treasures of the trousseau, stepped into it, with a high color and a slightly set smile. Mrs. Beauchamp was not yet visible when Champe arrived at her house, and the girl had scarcely seated herself in the library when the bell rang violently. Henry Denby came in, frock-coated, a white flower in his coat, but none of the joy of the expectant bridegroom in his face. He sank into a chair without a word.

"What in the world has happened?" Champe cried.

Denby raised his head, and looked at her despairingly.

"I don't know how to say it," he said. "She—she has jilted me!"

"What!" exclaimed Champe, horror-stricken.

"Jilted me!" Denby went on, brokenly. "It's incredible, but it's true. You don't know what this means to me, Champe. Jilted at the very church door—a laughing-stock for all my enemies—a joke for my whole world! It's the end of me. I can never hold up my head again. I won't pretend that my heart is broken. It's more

than that. It's my very life. I didn't love her. A man can't love twice in his life, and I never even tried. I—I can't see my way out of this. It isn't only that my pride is hurt. My whole career is ruined. I might as well die now and be done with it."

Champe took a step forward. Her eyes flashed.

"Nonsense, Henry Denby!" she said. "Be a man! Don't let her get the best of you like this—the hateful little cat! Don't give in!"

Denby merely groaned.

"Get even with her," Champe went on, furiously. "I'll marry you myself, just to spite her."

"When?" Denby shouted, springing to his feet.

"This very minute!" Champe cried. "I'll go right off and do it now, just to show her."

Champe never quite remembered the swift drive to the church, and the walk up the narrow aisle of St. John's. She had a dim fancy that neither the Iberian Minister nor Mr. Beauchamp cast so much as a glance at her. She found herself, still upborne by her indignation, repeating the responses firmly. Then she walked down the aisle, seeing nobody, and stepped into the waiting carriage.

Henry held her hand fast for a few moments, in silence. Then he remarked, casually.

"I may as well confess, Champe Denby, there never was any Miss Gaillard. The whole thing was entirely my own idea."



LIFE

IN youth, when met with golden hours, we cry:

"God! Let us live to gather every rose!"

Grown older, if we chance on joy, we sigh:

"God! Let us die before the vision goes!"

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN.

WITH A BOOK OF VERSES

(A DEDICATION)

LONG since I wrote this book, Most Dear, because
 I loved my little lore of rhetoric's laws,
 Thinking, perchance, a scholared mind to please
 With cautious rhyme and careful similes,
 Singing of love, of love, as blind men sing
 The myriad-tinted, hundred-colored Spring.
 Forgive me—that I wrote before I knew,
 Before Life of her pity brought me you.

Most Dear, at last I know how all profane
 My little lines went shrilling Love's refrain.
 There are no words, no earthly voice or wit
 To sing a thing so high and exquisite.
 With broken glass I sought to make a star;
 Oh, little book, how blasphemous you are!
 Let this forgiveness, this my pardon sue.
 I have been silent—silent since I knew.

Yet if, perchance, in this poor verse you see
 Some line not all unworthy, utterly,
 Who knows but one day at my window-pane
 Your laughter beat a moment like May rain.
 And ere you came yourself, across my door
 Your shadow fell—to these I wrote, no more.
 Dear, take these then—poor shadows of Love's grace,
 From one grown silent, having seen his face.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



HIS CONCERN

HE—I hope, darling, that your father isn't anxious about your future?
 SHE—Oh, no! It's about yours.



DASHAWAY—Was the seashore bracing?
 CLEVERTON—Very. I was embraced by the girls and braced by everybody else.

CHANTRY'S INVENTIONS

By Francis Willing Wharton

THE dining-room in the one hotel at Salisbury by the Sea was full of light and air. It would have been a delightful place to take your breakfast, dinner and tea in, Chantry thought, if it had not been used by the ladies of the house as a man trap. No available man escaped, be he eighteen or eighty. Chantry, suffering from the possession of money, a reputation and the full powers of manhood, had grown to feel that the idea of resting in this sunny little seaside place was a mockery.

He sat at his breakfast of a fine day in August and glowered at the list of excellent food provided by the keeper of the Homestead. He wasn't glowering at the menu in reality, but trying to give an impression to the room at large that if he was interrupted while eating, he would be cross, very cross, and he had every intention of setting aside his natural urbanity and carrying out the threat.

He ordered his fruit, ham and eggs, fish, rolls, coffee and finally cakes, as though they were so many loathsome messes, but, as he finished, he looked up at the nice little neat quadroom who waited on him, and smiled. Every bit of his previous work was undone. Mrs. Wilson, who was sliding and frothing toward him in her airy laces, saw that smile and foamed into a seat opposite him with a sigh of relief; she had previously been impressed by his angry back.

"Dear Mr. Chantry," she began.

To another man Chantry's expression would have been intensely amusing. He said nothing.

"Now, don't look like that," said the

lady, and Chantry obeying the iron laws of the society in which he lived, took off the truthful expression of his feelings from his face and looked polite—but with a string to it; anyone could see the string to it.

The quadroom placed the various beginnings of his breakfast before him.

"Now do begin with that lovely pear," said Mrs. Wilson. "Don't mind me. I only want to talk to you about a little plan of mine."

A sardonic expression settled on Chantry's face, and he cut the pear into a number of unnecessary pieces.

"It's just a beach party," went on his uninvited guest, "only a dozen of us to drive over to Walker's Beach, and I must have you."

"I'll be hanged if you do," thought Chantry, but he only looked at her and tried to think. They were driving him desperate among them, these horrible women! Should he have to leave this charming little place just because they wouldn't let him call his soul his own? Surely there must be some way of circumventing them. But what was it? Suddenly an idea occurred to him. He stared at Mrs. Wilson and gravely ate three pieces of pear while he hastily turned it over. He should have to tell a lie, and he never did it well. However, he must manage and he spoke.

"I'm so sorry," he said, "but I expect some one to come down and—er—join my aunt and myself this afternoon."

Mrs. Wilson gave him a brilliant smile. "How delightful!" she responded. "One of your collaborateurs, I suppose! All the better—bring him too!"

Chantry stared at her blankly; again he had an idea.

"It isn't—isn't a man," he said, slowly, gathering some additional color as he spoke, and his knowledge of women was not at fault.

"Oh," said Mrs. Wilson, sadly, "it isn't a man," and there was a moment's silence in which Chantry welcomed his coffee and eggs almost gaily.

"Not a man," again repeated Mrs. Wilson, thoughtfully, her very light green eyes fixing themselves upon him, "not a man! Why, you deep creature, you!"

He was pouring out his coffee as she spoke, and his hand trembled as he saw complete freedom before him in the meshes of another lie. He felt himself reddening, which was a lie in itself, and not being used to deception he felt guilty and still reddened, and Mrs. Wilson laid her hand on his arm; she was famous in her own family for divining hidden things.

"You bad man," she said, "I believe you are engaged all this time, and keeping us all in the dark."

Chantry never looked up from the egg he was demolishing.

"How exciting!" pursued Mrs. Wilson; "and does no one know?"

Chantry almost choked. "No one," he said, hastily, "not even my aunt, and I beg you will not betray me, Mrs. Wilson, will you?"

He was so big and able-looking that Mrs. Wilson glowed as she thought how delightfully she had him. Chantry's mere size was one of his attractions for her; she reveled in thinking that, fairy-like creature that she was, she managed him better than anyone else in the hotel.

"Of course not," she said. "How lovely it is! I hope she appreciates her important duties, Mr. Chantry, with your great talents and all; but do tell me, is she a slender blonde?" Mrs. Wilson was a slender blonde herself. "She ought to be, to make a contrast with you, you know. Now, do tell me just what she looks like."

Chantry set down his coffee-cup and

looked at her. "She is tall and slight," he began.

Mrs. Wilson nodded, approvingly.

"She has blue eyes," he went on, slowly, "and over them eyebrows like little black wings. Her skin is certainly a contrast to mine, very white, and she has carmine lips that shut with a sort of fierceness." He was looking out of the window as he spoke, with an expression that Mrs. Wilson inwardly dubbed tender; and he now turned back to her, but hardly seemed to bring her within his present range of vision.

"She sounds perfect," said Mrs. Wilson, enthusiastically. "Do go on!"

Chantry suddenly descended from the hill of memory he had climbed, and surveyed his marsh of lies. He felt a reaction.

"I beg your pardon, but I have a most important letter to write." He rose precipitately and strode out of the room, leaving the remains of his breakfast, and Mrs. Wilson floated after him, smiling to herself over the light appetites of lovers.

The afternoon had been divine. Chantry had rowed far out in the bay and then back to the upper beach, and, lying there, had sunk himself in peace and old memories. Not so very old—how long was it since he had seen her? Three years. Ah, he had been so frightfully poor then, he had had no time for anything but his work, and she never understood how little room a man has in his life for pleasure, and then she had gone off to Europe with her mother, and he had never seen her since. Things were different with him now; he had room in his life for something besides study, though he could not imagine a life that was not full of work. He should take a month's rest now and go back to the shop then, though the problem he had set himself was solved. How long it had taken him! Years spent alone, absorbed, fighting measurements and calculations. At first, he had been so very poor and unable to get the extravagant machinery, then he had thought

of that little cog and rivet on quite a different problem, and patented it, and he had become rich, very rich in a month. He had had no time to think of his money, except as it brought him the power to work, until now, and now for a while, his task done, he might rest and think of the other things in life. The sand was warm and yellow; he lay flat on it and wondered if she was out in this soft Summer weather, and if so, where? The hours passed, the sun had dropped out of sight, the moon had risen, and Chantry rowed home.

He mounted the hotel steps in the dusky night, and was startled by feeling a hand laid upon his arm.

"I've seen her!" cried Mrs. Wilson.

She was in evening dress covered with little golden spangles. She looked very pretty and triumphant, and Chantry wondered whether she had gone off her head. He had prepared an excuse as to the non-appearance of his fiancée—how she was to come in a day or two; in fact, whenever a beach party threatened. This new move of the enemy confused him.

"Seen her!" he repeated.

"Of course, I was off when she came," whispered Mrs. Wilson, "but I saw her at supper, charming—so perfectly like your description! I'd have known her anywhere! I've met her already, but I didn't dare tell her that I was in the grand secret. Oh, no, I only smiled. Of course, she didn't know what that meant nor why I was so pleased to see her."

Chantry stood in paralyzed silence.

"But now," went on his tormentor, "now I want you to come and let us have a nice talk, we three together; come."

He was shaken into speech.

"But that's impossible," he said; and his usual suavity had departed.

Mrs. Wilson stared. "Is there anything the matter?" she asked; "Miss Shippon is just in here." She made a step toward the parlor.

Chantry could hardly believe his ears. The very name, by some coincidence, the very name! He caught her by the arm.

"I beg you will not go in there now," he said; "I certainly cannot. I have had no supper, the room will be shut—I——"

For the second time that day, Mrs. Wilson used her divining-rod. "Something is really the matter," she said, slowly; "you go out by yourself, not with her; you are not in at supper-time; she was even sitting with the Brights; I thought that was funny. You don't want to go to her now, you—you have quarreled."

Chantry set his teeth. What in the name of all the furies were women created for?

"I must have some supper," he said, doggedly. "You can form any opinion of me you wish, only keep it to yourself, in heaven's name!"

Mrs. Wilson caught his arm.

"Make it up first!" she cried. "You won't be happy till you do, a man as much in love as you are. I'll bring her out here now."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Chantry, savagely. "You will please leave it alone," and he swung out of the darkness into the brightly lighted hall, and so into the supper-room.

He snatched a hasty meal, trying in a state of horrible mental confusion to think of a dignified exodus from his quandary, and almost welcomed his confederate, as he mentally called her, when he found her hovering ready for him in the hall.

"There you are," he said, with assumed cheer; "you and I must have a talk together." He smiled; it couldn't help being a delightful smile, but his heart was knocking about in his boots.

She had, he thought, an almost witch-like expression of knowingness and power.

"Come up to my sitting-room," she said; "we can talk there in peace, and I must understand."

"You shall," said Chantry, with an outward graciousness that made a barrier between her and some very bad language; and he followed in her train, very nearly on it, at moments.

They mounted the one flight, traversed a long corridor, and stopped at the door.

"Have you matches?" asked Mrs. Wilson, in her perfumed whisper.

Chantry wondered whether the windows would let out some of that potent heliotrope.

"I have." He produced a box.

"I never light the lamp till I come; it makes the room so hot, doesn't it?" said Mrs. Wilson. "Will you go in first?"

He turned the handle and entered; striking a match, he advanced through the darkness.

"The lamp is on the table in front of you," she added, softly, and he heard the door close behind him. It struck him as a proof of what frightful strides to intimacy he and his hostess were making and, seeing the lamp by the glimmer of the match, he raised the shade and lighted it. The little flame walked slowly round the wick, and, as he fitted the chimney, he became aware that, sitting silent on a sofa beside him, was a woman. So he was not to have a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Wilson, after all. It startled him, but he waited till he had quite done with the lamp before he looked at this intruder. He stifled a sound of wonder on his lips, as his eyes met a pair of eyes surmounted by two little black wings. He turned to Mrs. Wilson, but she was not there. The door, when it had closed, had shut her out.

At this moment, the key turned in the lock, and, to Chantry and that silent figure on the sofa, came the sound of a soft, mocking voice.

"I'll be back in half an hour. Make it up!"

Chantry stood quite still, and there was silence.

"I suppose," said Miss Shippon, at last, "that she is quite, quite mad. You used to be sane; can you explain?"

Chantry gave an awkward laugh, and then, coming forward, held out his hand.

"Let us shake hands first," he said, "and then—then I'll confess it isn't all Mrs. Wilson's fault."

They shook hands, and then he walked about the room with his hands in his pockets, and something between a smile and a frown on his face.

Miss Shippon watched him. He hadn't changed much in three years, she thought; he was the same big, burly man with little eyes like an elephant's, a great big mouth with finely cut lips, very white teeth, a harsh, red skin and straight hair. He smiled all about his eyes just as he had done three years before, and it had a charm that made people willing to make much effort to produce that result.

Chantry came to a stop before her.

"I've been an awful fool," he said; "must I tell on myself in this hideous way?"

"I'm afraid you must," she returned, smiling, "unless it is a habit in this hotel to lock women up with strange men."

"Oh, come, I'm not a strange man!" he protested.

"But you might just as well have been," was her retort. "How did she know? I'd never mentioned your name. I couldn't make out her cordiality, but just yielded, fascinated, when she brought me up here for a little talk. How could I know you were the box of matches she went for!"

Chantry folded his arms on his wide chest, and brought his perplexed smile to bear on her. She wondered if in three years many other women had fallen in love with this big, burly man with twinkling eyes.

"She thinks we are engaged," said Chantry, slowly; and there was a moment's silence.

"And yet you say she isn't mad," returned Miss Shippon. Her color was rising.

He stuck his hands in his pockets, and stared at the floor.

"Well, you see," he hesitated, "she has reason to think so."

The girl had grown crimson.

"Reason?" she repeated.

"I told her so."

There passed what seemed to Chantry an hour; he did not dare to look up.

"You told her so?" repeated the low, intense voice of his companion; and Chantry raised his eyes.

"Wait," he said, and slipped down into the little chair beside her. "Let me tell you the whole thing."

She rose, precipitately.

"I'm going," she said; "it's preposterous! This is, I suppose, a practical joke; it is an outrage. I'm going."

She had reached the door, and, having shaken it and proved the completeness of their isolation, she turned and faced him with angry eyes and lips that quivered a little.

Chantry also had risen.

"My dear Lucy," he said, "have you forgotten me so utterly as to believe me capable of putting you in this position voluntarily? Think a minute—you used to know me, we were friends once; why we have been so long apart from our friendship seems hard to understand, but, surely I am not quite forgotten."

They were standing looking at each other.

"No," the girl gave a sigh, "of course you wouldn't—but then why——?"

He took her hand and led her back to her seat. "Sit down, and listen patiently," he said. She did so.

"I came down here to rest," he began.

The girl sat up very straight. "Is it done?" she asked, impulsively.

Chantry raised his eyebrows. "The story, do you mean?"

"No, no, the double wheel," she answered, impatiently.

He stared a little. "Do you remember about the double wheel?"

"Of course; but is it done?" she repeated.

"Pretty nearly, only the patent to get," he said; "however, to return. I came here to rest, to swim and fish, to lie on the sand—and I have been hunted like a dog!" He laid his hand on the arm of her chair. "Like a dog," he repeated.

She smiled.

"No man escapes," he went on, "and they have an idea I'm a scientific swell, don't you know, and they have

never let me know a moment's peace. They have lawn parties and boat parties and hay parties and grass parties and——"

She laughed. "And horse parties and cat parties."

He nodded grimly. "Even so; cat parties with a widow and three fine specimens with long claws! Well, this morning, Mrs. Wilson began about a beach party and I was desperate, and necessity being the mother of invention, I invented. I told her I expected some one this afternoon. She said, 'Oh, one of your delightful collaborators! Bring him too!' The ground again yawned beneath my feet, and I said 'it wasn't a man'!"

Miss Shippon smiled, and Chantry, looking into her eyes, smiled also.

"Not bad, eh?" he added.

"It depends," she said; and he gave a groan.

"It does indeed depend. I was dealing unaware with Sherlock Holmes and Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe all rolled into one. She looked at me so hard that I got red, and what do you suppose she said? 'Oh, Mr. Chantry, you are engaged and keeping us all in the dark;' and, like a fool, I thought it a way out of my troubles and let her think she had hit the nail on the head. Then she wanted to know all about it and, finally, asked if the young lady was 'a slender blonde'! I couldn't stand that, so I took a dive into my memory and——"

"And from under the rubbish brought out my face and described it," she said. She had lost her bright color, but her eyes were shining.

"Exactly," he returned, "from under the rubbish brought out the most vivid and charming memory I possessed."

She bowed with a curl of her lip.

He bowed in return, and went on: "I told her you—I mean my fiancée—had eyebrows like little black wings, blue eyes, a white skin and carmine lips that shut rather fiercely—she knew you at once."

Miss Shippon colored again.

Chantry proceeded: "When I came

in she attacked me at once, we had a sort of tangled conversation, and she gathered, with her usual headlong speed, that we had quarreled, and were not ready to make it up, and so she has brought us together, poor little fool, with the best intentions." He stopped and looked at her. "What am I to tell her when she opens the door?"

Miss Shippon raised her round chin in the air. "The truth," she said.

Chantry hesitated. "That instead of our making it up, I had made it all up myself!" He laughed.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Anything you like, but the truth."

He looked at her. "It won't sound so very simple, will it?" he said. "She will ask why I described *you*—you see—she won't believe I didn't know you were within five hundred miles."

"And didn't care whether I was within a thousand," supplemented Miss Shippon. "Perhaps not, but she will gradually give in, when she sees we see nothing of each other, never meet, hardly speak, and all that."

She was facing him, her eyes very wide and rather hard, her lips, as he had said, fiercely put together. Her arms and neck showed round and white through her black lawn dress, her silky black hair was coiled in a wide braid just above her brow, and Chantry took it all slowly in.

"I see," he answered; "that will, of course, convince her—when we never meet and hardly speak; one might be said to include the other, but it strengthens the impression to put it so, doesn't it? The impression is quite definite when one has done, and most—remarkably unlike what will happen."

They stared at each other.

He went on. "I remember," he said, "I had forgotten—your pride, your horrid, mean pride. It is there still, it seems. I suppose you would really treat me like that if I didn't have the

courage to meet that devil under those black wings and fight him. We were friends, dear friends three years ago. Have I done anything to forfeit the right to your friendship?"

She lowered her white lids and set her teeth, then spoke: "Oh, no, but friendship starves like other things."

"Oh," said Chantry, "it does, does it?"

She looked at him. "Yes, when it isn't even thrown a bone."

He folded his arms on his chest, and through the dark red of his skin the color rose. There was a long pause, during which their eyes never parted. The girl gave a savage twist to her lip. "You have all the courage needed," she said, "why not have the frankness to say you had forgotten me in your work; it is nothing wrong, only a fact."

"In a sense," responded the man, slowly, "it is true; in a sense only. I have lived alone with the thing ever since, wrestled, fought, bled—and back—"

"Far back," she interjected.

He met her eyes. "Far back I thought of the few good things of life—the sands, the sea—and you."

"When you stopped your work," she returned slowly, "you sought the sands, the sea!"

"And found you!" said Chantry; and they heard the key in the lock.

Chantry pushed back his chair, and they both waited till Mrs. Wilson had floated in beside them.

"It wasn't such a bad idea, after all, was it?" she said, softly, and fixed her clever, iridescent eyes on them.

Chantry got up and looked into them.

"It was an inspiration from heaven," he said.

"I can't ask for a fuller acknowledgment than that," said Mrs. Wilson. "Come down and waltz with me first and with her afterward." Which was just what Chantry did.



EVERLYN—Yes, my great-grandmother eloped with my great-grandfather.
CHOLLY—Just fancy! Old people like that!

THE QUEST OF NEAR AND FAR

By Zona Gale

THE air is purged of gold, and in its stead
Is poured a fire of silver on the green;
And now the moon, new-risen from the dead
Of dearer nights than this, finds her demesne
Lonely of stars, as they to greet their queen
Had rushed in argent riot from the blue,
To spill themselves like flowers, or waste unseen
In stealing perfumes that elude and woo—
As now eludes, now woos, the wind the sweet night through.

Down from her turret, when the dusk was new,
The Lady Margot stepped, and, lured by wile
Of faint, near things that croon of what they do
With wandering touch, she thought to walk the while
The hours were printless on the idle dial.
Deep in a garden, lamped with lily bells
Which held the light as did some opal vial,
She took her way near where a fountain wells
And wakes its rainbow ribbons into madrigals.

Half fearfully, she scanned the violet gloom,
Thick-shrouding the great wood beyond the wall;
For shapes are woven by the troubled loom
Of night; and tremulous tapestries oft fall
Across familiar paths, and make them all
Astir with effigies that snarl and grin
And take strange steps along a horrid hall,
Which is by day a lane of leaves within—
As if at night a holy nun should dream of sin.

At length, she reached a little windless glade,
Hushed with the hope of loves that it had known,
And dreamful of the days when lips were laid
On lips that trembled as they found their own.
There, where the moon-swept close was thickest sown
With shadows, was the lady met with one
Who sat with drooping head and made soft moan,
He was a stranger knight, whose armor shone
Bright as the molten golden javelins of the sun.

"What things are griefs?" the Lady Margot sighed,
And moved a little nearer, pityingly.
"The wonder wasteth from my days!" he cried;
"The burden of my blessings wearie me!

Lo, I have journeyed from an unoared sea
 In the white north to where the suns caress
 Warm, sail-sown oceans, murmuring round a key
 Odorous with wine and fruit in fragrant dress—
 And yet I passion for some little happiness!"

"Aye, now," the lady cried, "most strangely come
 Are you, Sir Knight, for I am one who longs,
 As never heart has longed before, for some
 Strange world, strange tongue tuneful with alien songs,
 Mad, bright old cities brooding on their wrongs,
 With unfamiliar streets that smile and show
 Me many a colonnade and portico
 Where some unclaimed and starry hour belongs.
 O you, who know all that I long for, bid me go!"

No strange thing seemed her prayer unto the knight,
 Who knew her father's little court by name,
 And pitied her that all her beauty bright
 Must fail and fade with such confined fame.
 Swiftly he knelt to her, and in no shame
 She gave her hand the while he led her where
 Within the close the moon took silvery aim,
 And lured a sickle-bed of bloom to bear,
 In bloom's wan stead, a birth of stars, pearly as air.

The lady stooped and laid her little hand
 Upon a dreaming lily, whose dim cream
 And gold, stirred at the fingers' faint demand,
 Dreamed that the white touch was their sweetest dream.
 The lady rose, and every opiate beam
 Made lucent pillage from her unbound hair,
 And moths brushed lightly through the arrowy stream
 In quest of stars. The lady was so fair
 That the dusk swooned with passion and the light with prayer.

"Nay, now, my child," the knight said, courteously,
 "Would that your joy lay in your castle home,
 In phantom folk that pace your 'broidery,
 In haunted parchment of a pictured tome.
 But if you are of those whose hearts must roam
 Afar afield, to meet the hushed advance
 Of spheres and win from the blown spray and foam
 What weaker some leave to impotent chance,
 Then, by my blade, that blade shall bring deliverance!"

A little door, covert in creeping green,
 Gave from the court upon the room where lay
 The aged, doting nurse, who wept, I ween,
 At all the Lady Margot strove to say.
 But, when it had proved vain to weep or pray,
 She rose and bade her trembling fingers light
 Her taper, and thereby she led the way
 Through secret gates, till, soberly bedight,
 The three set forth together in the faery night.

Oh, many a league for many a day they went,
And some magician kind, they were aware,
Delivered captive treasures, and spent
His lavish store of beauty everywhere:
Slim, brazen towers that taught the sun to share
Its shining, he revealed; and odorous gloom,
Packing with wonders the receiving air;
Flowered silken sails that set the sea abloom;
Isles webbed with fabrics from the moon's high loom.

Sometimes the lady knelt in a fleet prow
That flung the gaudy bubbles from the blue,
And joyed to hear the lean blade of the bow
Plunging the thundering, sundered breakers through;
Keen swept the foam-born breaths of salt, to do
Sweet violence to her pale cheek; and all
The spirits of her fancy peopled new
The perilous sea's impermanent citadel,
That kindled into spray with the ship's rise and fall.

Sometimes she stepped within a pillared way,
Dim gray with shade and honey-bright with sun,
Where all the costly stuffs for barter lay,
And she might hear how many a drowsing one,
Stretched on a peacock patterned skin, would run
Soft syllable along soft syllable,
Praising the violet and vermilion
Of gems and cloths, right eager-tongued to tell
News, musical with names, to one who loved them well.

Meanwhile, the stranger knight was by her side,
Burning to serve and welcoming command;
And never wish of hers might be denied,
For his swift sword was like a dexterous wand.
And by her side, in all that alien land,
The old nurse journeyed, plaintive and perplexed,
Condemning what she did not understand,
And with all other understanding vexed,
Palsied, and muttering charms for what might 'tide them next.

Then it befell that, as they fared, the knight
Forgot his weariness, and many a morn
He faced with joy the lottery of light,
And walked no more apart in mood forlorn.
And now, her tremulous shyness half outworn,
The Lady Margot oft passed through a town
And saw therein but trinkets to adorn
Her little bodice and her silken gown;
And, when he spoke, she looked up swiftly, and looked down.

Oh, sweet it was to see the two dream on!
She, wistful of the runes that he could teach
Of men and cities, dreamed that in such wan
Delights lay life; and he for her sweet speech,

With all its faëry fancy, would beseech,
 And dreamed that in such fancies lay delight!
 And all the time the heart of each for each
 Was calling with the ancient urge of night
 For night, what time the lotus of the dawn is white.

At length they came to a melodious marge
 Where, with sweet perturbation, the moved sea
 Leapt lovingly about the land in large
 Embrace, and from such soft nativity
 The music mounted in dissolving key
 And wed with wind. There, in a crescent cove
 Sun-lorn and still, the eyes of each leapt free,
 And all the world, in a wild silence, strove
 To bare its spirit in their breathèd words of love.

"O Sweet, my Sweet!" the knight quoth, reverently,
 "Lo! now, the marvel: that I wearied sore,
 On such a singing earth as this, to be
 One whom the gods give ever one gift more.
 There is no spot from shore to patient shore
 That is not burdened with its waiting bliss;
 Oh, yet, dear love, how little bliss it bore,
 Wert thou not near to tremble at my kiss.
 At last, we know the truth: the best of life is this!"

Slow dipped the idle sails without the bay,
 Sun-smitten in the drowsy afternoon;
 Unimaged in the ripples' purple play,
 White reefs of cloud on airy shores were strewn.
 Then fairly the shadows fell, and soon,
 When gloaming was poured soft on beach and foam,
 The sea gave up a silver shell—the moon.
 Then tenderly she turned, who longed to roam
 Afar, and whispered: "Love, would that our way lay home!"

Near by, upon a rainbow drift of weeds,
 The old nurse mumbled at her prayers and charms,
 And now her shaking fingers felt her beads,
 And now with incantation her old arms
 Were raised to shadowy powers. Oh, grim alarms
 Beset the gaping one when love appears!
 And never lover's glance or kiss half warms
 The world, but that some dotard nods and leers,
 And all the charnel souls are tip-toe with their fears.

Now, silently, across the glimmering sands
 Slow paced the lady and the stranger knight,
 And there were clinging lips and clinging hands,
 And all the uses of the hour were bright;
 But, when they came to where the moon was white
 Upon the wet weeds, there the old dame lay
 Stark on the sea-moss, and the labyrinth light
 Received her soul that knew it not. There may
 Be heaven for such as mock at love, but none can say.

Upon the sands the lady knelt and wept;
 Her lover kissed away her piteous tears.
 "Nay, tender soul," he said, "we have but kept
 The truce of nature with the yester-years.
 Now are the old things passed away, and fears
 For the new day are vain. Therefore, arise!
 Love vanquishes the past itself; love hears
 The siren cities chant of home; love's eyes
 Have lit a sullen world for me to paradise."

Into the silver dark the lovers went,
 Over the silver sea to golden isles,
 Piping their songs of heavenly wonderment,
 And fabling the unhaunted age with smiles.
 And ever, with the swift melodious miles,
 A sterner harmony breathed through their bliss:
 "The old shall be outworn; that which reviles
 The gods shall perish by their ministries.
 But we will walk with truth: the best of life is this."



A SUMMER RESORT

A SUMMER resort is a place where dressmakers display their goods. The proper ingredients of a Summer resort are a blond beach, a delicate, rheumatic hotel, about one thousand victims and plenty of hot air. Summer resorts were originally invented for giving people a rest. Now their principal purpose is to make everybody tired.

In all well-regulated Summer resorts, the food is prepared in a blacksmith's forge located in the rear of the hotel, and served to the guests in porcelain capsules three times a day, whether they want it or not.

The officials of the Summer resort consist of the proprietor, or head bunco-steerer; the clerk, or assistant bunco-steerer; the head-waiter, or chief robber, and the common waiter, or ordinary highwayman.

The proprietor has the best room in the house, which commands a fine view of the ocean and the baggage of the guests. He notes the new and strong arrivals, and mourns over those who are too weak to remain any longer. He shakes hands with all the millionaires and gives the haughty glance to the dry-goods clerk unaccompanied by a chaperon.

The nearest approach that any Summer resort comes to diamond-backed terrapin in the kitchen is a diamond-fronted clerk in the office.

It is the clerk's duty to read and sort all the guests' mail, carefully putting the cash received into the surplus. Coming as he always does from one of the oldest families of Harlem or East St. Louis, he is naturally superior to all the guests, and conceals it with difficulty. His manners are usually a cross between a custom-house officer and a Weber & Fields star, and he always hands you the pen with the third finger of the right hand upon which rests a superb Koh-i-nur that has had yellow fever.

The head-waiter sweeps the air for you as you enter the dining-room, and takes what you have left. If you are poor and of humble descent, wear ready-

made clothes and a look of anxiety, he seats you between an undertaker and a grandmother in the mourner's row. If you look like a horse owner, or a cotton king, he plunges you into the bevy of heiresses who sit at the star table. Then the ordinary waiter places around you a variety of dishes, faintly discernible with the naked eye on a clear day, which remind you so much of real food that you begin to feel hungry.

The principal products raised by Summer resorts are money and flies. Quite a wide gulf separates the two, however, as your money is leaving you all the time, but the flies never leave you at all.

In the beginning of the season a regiment of flies is stationed in each room, with instructions to give no quarter.

Some Summer resorts, having found that the flies will sometimes desert the rooms, put in screens, so that they cannot get away.

The early-morning fly at the Summer resort, who finds insufficient nourishment in the body of his emaciated victim, will often become desperate by hunger and swallow all the towels in the room.

Children exist in great numbers in Summer resorts, for some unknown reason these places being supposed to be good for the final recovery from measles, mumps, scarlet fever and other popular diseases. They romp in the corridors while you take your afternoon nap, and thoughtfully wake you up early enough in the morning to take the business man's train for town when you have foolishly planned to pound your adamant mattress for another hour.

The only things that are not allowed at a Summer resort are dogs. But it isn't definitely known whether this is a wise provision of Providence or the S. P. C. A.

TOM MASSON.



THE EXPLANATION

"WAR may have its horrors," said Suburbs, reflectively, in reply to my remark, "but at least the warriors' wives don't make them slop whitewash over everything."

"Is whitewash darkening your life?" I asked.

"Did you ever get a speck of lime in your eye, and, while prancing around in your blind agony, sit down in the bucket of whitewash, and upon at last recovering your sight discover your pastor watching and listening to you?" demanded Suburbs, grimly.

"And yet," he added, in a tone of amazement, "people wonder why men don't go to church."



BEHIND IN THE RENT

HEWITT—His words moved me.

JEWETT—Whose?

HEWITT—My landlord's.

THE LITTLE RED DEVIL

By E. R. Punshon

EVEN the office-boy grinned as he handed in the slip of paper bearing Hugh Rogers's name, and the editor frowned and sighed as he saw it, and was tempted to refuse to see him.

"Oh, well," he said, at last, "show him in—show him in," and then, as the boy went out, he muttered to himself: "After all, we were at school together, and Rogers has more brains than any man I know—if only he could have kept straight."

He leaned back in his chair, and got ready the two half-crowns he supposed it was the object of this visit to borrow, but when Rogers actually entered he hastily exchanged them for a sovereign. Never before had he seen his old school-fellow present such a miserable aspect. His boots were out at the toes, the rim of his hat flapped loosely, he appeared to have no waistcoat at all, and with a keen regret, the editor noticed how wild and wandering was the expression of his eyes.

"Rogers," he said, "you've been at it again—why in thunder, man," he asked, with exasperation, "can't you keep away from it?"

Rogers made no answer, but he sat down on a chair and smiled to himself, and then, drawing a manuscript from his pocket, still sat and smiled, stroking it softly between his yellow, claw-like hands.

"Ned," he said, suddenly, "do you remember lending me five shillings a month ago?"

"Why, yes," answered the editor, for that transaction was the ordinary termination to his interviews with his old friend. "Why?" he asked.

"Because," said Rogers, "that is the reason—" he paused, and once again he stroked the manuscript with a long, caressing gesture of affection—"the reason—the reason," he muttered, vaguely, while the editor began to fear he was still under the influence of some recent carouse, "the reason why I've brought this to you," he concluded, with sudden briskness, "rather than to any other paper in London."

"Oh, I see," said the editor, pleased that Rogers should really appear to have done some work at last. Lately he had completed very little, content to drowse and dream away his time, putting upon paper now and again some striking line, perhaps, some isolated fragment of wonderful description or some haunting dozen words of exquisite melody, but never completing anything that the most accommodating paper or publisher could print. "You let me have it, and I'll give you a guinea on the spot," promised the editor.

"And when," asked Rogers, still hugging his manuscript as though loath to part with it, "will you undertake to publish?"

The editor made an impatient gesture. That was just like Rogers, he thought, always making some impracticable condition whenever one tried to benefit him. Besides, remarkable as Rogers's poetry often was, occasionally it was not quite suitable for publication, and occasionally, too, it would be a mere commonplace jingle. Rogers had no faculty of self-criticism, and his work, always either very good or very bad, ranked equally high in his own estimation. The editor felt

no inclination to bind himself in the matter, but he was perfectly willing to pay over the guinea on the spot—though it would very likely have to come out of his own pocket in the end.

"Well," said Rogers, "will you promise to publish in October?"

"My dear fellow," gasped the editor, taken altogether aback at this audacious demand, "surely you must know October is made up by now?"

"Well, November will do," said Rogers; "but no later."

"Oh, no later, eh?" exclaimed the editor, considerably annoyed; and then, giving way to a feeling of pity again, he remarked: "Now, Rogers, you must know as well as I do how poetry——"

"This isn't poetry," replied Rogers; "this is a story."

"Oh, well, that's worse still," said the editor, decidedly. "I might find room for a short poem—but stories—" He waved his arm impressively in the air. "My dear Rogers," he said, "we are full up with stories for months—for months, I do assure you."

He paused to watch the effect of this announcement, and Rogers laid the manuscript on his desk.

"My price," he said, "is twenty pounds."

The editor repressed a strong inclination to pitch the thing into the waste-paper basket. He put his hand on the bell to have Rogers shown out, then he said: "Oh, come now, that's absurd, you know."

"Well, you just read it, Ned Neale," answered Rogers. Quite suddenly he leaned forward, his hands on the desk, his head thrust forward with bulging eyes that seemed ready to start from their sockets, his heavy and foul breath coming in quick gasps. "You just read it, you just read it."

For a moment, the editor half imagined that the man's mind had given way, that at last his way of life had overthrown his brain. But, as quickly as he had risen, Rogers sank back on his chair, gasping and panting, his hands pressed to his heart.

"You read it," he muttered again. "Five shillings you lent me—but this is the little red devil, you know—you lent me five bob, so I brought it to you to read."

"Oh, of course, I'll read it," said the editor, not without a little inward sigh as he thought of all the work he was neglecting.

He picked the manuscript up and began to read, and the ensuing silence was broken only by the rustle of the leaves as he turned them over. At last he finished, and putting the pages down, peered hard at Rogers. Then he picked it up once more, and read it all over again.

"Well," said Rogers, "what do you think of it?"

"I don't know," said the editor. "Good Lord, I don't know!"

"Will you publish in November, then?"

"I'll publish in October," said the editor; "I'll have to upset all my arrangements, but I'll publish in October all the same."

"I thought so," said Rogers, gravely, rising from his seat.

"But one moment," said the editor; "don't go. Hang it, man, how did you come to write this? It's quite different from your ordinary work."

"Don't you recognize the style?" asked Rogers. He did not seem at all elated, only tired and a little anxious to be away. "I thought all you people knew my style."

"Oh, style!" said the editor. He waved style away with a gesture. "Of course, I would know it for your work anywhere, what with those dots you are so fond of, and 'piquant' and 'tenebrious,' and all your other pet words. No, it's the idea; where did you get that from?"

"Why," said Rogers, slowly, "I—I got it—that's all."

"Well, it's a rum bit of work," commented the editor; "what's this mean?"

He pointed, as he spoke, to an incoherent spluttering with the pen that ran all around the ample margin it was Rogers's invariable custom to leave on

his work. It bore perhaps an indistinct resemblance to writing, but yet contained no distinguishable letters, while at the same time it seemed to be repeated too frequently, and too exactly in the same form, to be mere idle scribbling. It appeared also two or three times in the body of the manuscript, though without any apparent relation to the context. Leaning over the editor's shoulder, Rogers examined it closely.

"I don't know," he said, in a whisper; "what does it mean?"

"Well, you ought to know that, oughtn't you?" answered the editor, staring.

Rogers stretched out a trembling hand.

"Don't say that," he implored; "don't—it's the little red devil," he said, in a whisper, and thereupon slipped from the room and disappeared, leaving the editor staring blankly after him.

About half an hour afterward it occurred to the editor for the first time that Rogers had gone without either receiving any money or leaving an address. "He'll be back soon," the editor assured himself; but in this he proved mistaken, for the year crept on, and the November number was issued, and the attention the story attracted was almost forgotten before Rogers made his appearance at the office again. The moment his name was sent in, the editor came hurrying out.

"Come in, Rogers," he said, hastily. "I've been expecting you for months."

Rogers drifted noiselessly, aimlessly, as it seemed, into the room, and at last came to a rest in a chair by the fire, above which he spread his thin and shivering hands. If he had looked ill before, he looked dying now; and, if his clothes had seemed rags before, now it was a wonder how they clung on him at all.

"I've brought you another manuscript," he said, suddenly, over his shoulder.

"I'm glad to hear it," replied the editor. "Do you know, Rogers," he

added, slowly, "I almost believe that last thing of yours affected the circulation?"

The editor spoke in tones of awe, for this was a feat he had almost lost faith in the power of any story to perform, but Rogers did not seem at all impressed. He only grunted and went on warming his hands, and then, taking a manuscript from his pocket, he threw it on the table. The editor picked it up, and at once became absorbed in its perusal.

"I owe you twenty pounds for that other story," he said, when he had finished; "I'll give you thirty for this. Shall I give it you in cash? And, by the way, there are a lot of letters for you here—about that last story, I suppose."

"In cash," said Rogers, greedily; "yes, in cash," and with an impatient gesture he threw the whole lot of letters the editor had given him into the fire. "Yes, I'll take it in cash."

The editor wrote a cheque and sent out to get it cashed, and then he observed, still bending over the story, which he thought even more remarkable than the first one: "There's that odd scribble again all up and down the margin; what does it mean, Rogers?" He looked at it attentively, and gradually he seemed to distinguish a far-away resemblance to words, so that he became convinced it represented a sentence of some kind, though the meaning and even the language he was quite unable to make out. "Can't you read it, Rogers?" he asked.

"No!" screamed Rogers, and, looking up with a start, the editor saw him regarding him with such an expression of awful fear as human features have seldom worn. "No!" he screamed again; "I can't, I can't, I can't!" and, so crying, he rushed from the room; and though the editor followed him at once, he was unable to overtake him.

"He must be mad, I think," muttered the editor to himself; "but what made him look so scared? And, by Jove, he has gone without his money again."

This time, however, the editor had

not to wait so long for news of his contributor, for this second story was still in the press when a post-card arrived, addressed from a remote part of the East End, and bearing a request from Rogers that the editor would come to see him without delay. Within half an hour the editor was on his way, and soon arrived at a squalid side street, where the appearance of his hansom was evidently an almost unprecedented event. The untidy woman who answered his knock directed him to the top floor, and added the information that he would find the gentleman pretty bad.

"He is ill, then?" asked the editor.

"Oh, just starving," answered the woman, with quiet acquiescence in the familiar; "he has pawned everything, too, except his little red devil."

"His what?" asked the editor, starting.

"Oh, a figure he has that he says talks to him at night. It's terrible ugly, and Mrs. Briggs offered him a tenner for it to stop her baby screaming so, but he wouldn't part with it."

The editor went on up the stairs and, knocking, entered a bare and draughty room, containing nothing except a heap of straw and rags on which Rogers lay, and a rickety table which stood before an upturned box, and on it—as the editor noticed at once—a roll of manuscript. On the broken mantelpiece was a small and hideously ugly figure shaped in the conventional form of a devil, with hoof, horns and tail, and colored a brilliant red. The moment he entered the room this thing caught his eye, and he noticed with a shiver of repulsion the horrid leer pictured on the small face which was supported on its hollowed palm; the whole attitude being one of brooding and sinister patience. An odd but very strong desire seized the editor to knock it down and see it break to pieces on the floor, but instead he went and stood by the sick man's side.

"Well, Rogers, here I am, you see," he said; "and how are you, old chap?"

"Pretty bad," murmured Rogers; "but there's another story for you,"

and he pointed feebly toward the table.

"I see," said the editor, taking possession of it; "but wait a moment."

He went down-stairs again, and by the offer of liberal payment soon had one messenger flying for a doctor and another for a nurse and food, and another with a telegram to a nursing-home he knew of to arrange for Rogers's admission. Then he went back and told him what he had done, but the sick man's only comment was a fretful demand to know if he had read the story yet.

"Well, I will now," said the editor, to soothe him, and, going over to the window, he stood there and became lost to everything, till he suddenly came to himself, with a loud exclamation, to find the doctor already in the room, bending over Rogers.

"What's the matter?" asked the doctor, turning sharply.

"Oh, nothing," replied the editor, much ashamed of himself; "it was just an optical delusion in this wretched light, I suppose—but for the moment I could have sworn I saw that figure on the mantelpiece move."

"Well, it's ugly enough," agreed the doctor, meditatively. "Your friend is pretty weak, but I don't think he needs anything beyond good food and attention."

"Well, he shall have that," declared the editor, and just then Rogers opened his eyes and beckoned to him.

"Have you read the story?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the editor; "I'll give you fifty for this one, so then I shall owe you a hundred altogether."

Rogers nodded in a satisfied way.

"I would not mind so much," he muttered, "if he wouldn't come and sit on the table."

"Wandering," observed the doctor; and then, to the nurse who appeared, he gave directions what to do until arrangements could be made to move the patient. While they were talking the editor went back to look at the story again, and he now noticed that the incoherent scribbling which had

puzzled him on the two former manuscripts was repeated on this. The marks seemed on the whole to be a little plainer now and had certainly been made more firmly, with less hesitation in the lines, but were still, for all that, quite illegible.

"I wonder what it means?" mused the editor, curiously; "it doesn't seem to have any connection with the story, and yet——"

And, presently, he took an opportunity to ask Rogers what that illegible scribble on his manuscript meant, and with just one low cry of fear the sick man fainted away.

"Now," interposed the doctor, angrily, seeing what had happened, "you have made him faint. Couldn't you see how weak he was, and how unfit to stand worrying questions?"

"But," said the editor, defending himself, "it was quite a trivial remark—nothing of any importance."

"Well, what did he faint for, then?" asked the doctor.

The editor retreated in disgrace, and a day or two later called again to see Rogers, now safely ensconced in the nursing-home.

"He's much better," the nurse, who was showing him up-stairs, assured him; "he only needed rest and care. But he still talks at night to himself. I had to go in last night on purpose to ask him to be quiet;" and then she ushered him into an airy, comfortable room, where Rogers, already appearing much better, lay in bed.

However, the editor did not look at him, but, staring and gaping on the threshold, gazed in blank amazement at the mantelpiece, where stood that little figure of a fiend, which he had seen before, colored a brilliant red.

"Isn't it hideous?" said the nurse, in a whisper; "but Mr. Rogers will have it by him."

"Quite so," said the editor, moistening his dry lips.

Though the figure was undoubtedly the same, he saw with a strange terror that in some mysterious way its position and attitude had become slightly changed. The abhorrent and

disgusting leer on the small face remained as before, but the chin no longer rested on the hollowed hands, for they were now held with bent fingers in front of the body, giving an idea of movement suddenly arrested. Indeed, the whole attitude of the figure seemed now to convey not the idea of secret and brooding patience, but of instant readiness for action. Once again the editor had an impulse to throw it on the floor, that it might break into ten thousand pieces which he could trample into dust, but instead he sat down by Rogers's side.

"Well, how are you now?" he asked; "feeling better?"

"Oh, much better," answered Rogers, loudly, and then added, in a whisper: "I have another manuscript for you."

"Another already?" exclaimed the editor; "but, my dear fellow, you are not fit to do any work yet."

"I finished it last night," continued Rogers, in the same whisper; "in spite of interruptions," he added.

"Interruptions?" repeated the editor; and he remembered how the nurse had spoken of some midnight talk she had overheard. A sense of uneasiness, of a heavy and an evil oppression, weighed him down with vague apprehensions. "Look here," he said, angrily, "you've just got to stop working or I'll speak to the doctor, by Jove!"

"You see," said Rogers, whispering again, "here there is no table near, so that he has to cling to the bed-rails. And that's so awkward."

"What do you mean?" asked the editor, and his glance wandered toward the little red image on the mantelpiece.

"Here's the manuscript," said Rogers, abruptly. "Don't read it now."

"All right," answered the editor, and then he once more caught sight of that odd splutter of incoherent and apparently meaningless scribbling which seemed now to distinguish all Rogers's writing. "What on earth makes you tack that scribble to all

you do?" he asked, crossly. "What does it mean?"

"Do you wish me to die," said Rogers, in a low and terrible voice, "that you ask me that?"

The editor stared, but, seeing the other's agitation, he said nothing. As soon, however, as he returned to his office he read the story; which he found more strange and weirdly fascinating, with its half-hinted glimpses of another world and a more profound philosophy, than even the others had been. Then he devoted himself to trying to decipher the scribbled sentence which ran all over and through this manuscript, as it had through the other three. He even got a magnifying-glass to help him, and at last he convinced himself that it bore no meaning at all, that it was probably just some nervous trick Rogers had got into. Then a new idea struck him, and he called in his office-boy, a rosy-cheeked little lad, who had been with him only a day or two.

"Here," he said, "can you make out what this means?"

"Huh, yes, sir," answered the lad, contemptuously; "that's, 'Take now your razor or a knife, and sever quickly your throat from ear to ear.'"

"It says—what?" cried the editor; but now when he bent above the manuscript again these marks seemed to him to bear that meaning so plainly that he could not understand how he had ever failed to read them. "What does it *mean*, though?" he muttered to himself again.

Late as it was, he took his hat and was soon on his way back to the nursing-home, which he reached close on midnight, and found all lighted up and in a state of much agitation and confusion.

"Oh, have you got my telegram already?" said the resident doctor, meeting him in the hall. "A terrible affair—I assure you such a thing has never happened here before—a ter-

rible, a most terrible affair—and quite unprecedented."

"Indeed?" said the editor, and he did not ask what had happened, for in his clamorous brain echoed unceasingly like thunder the words the office-boy had read to him, "Take now your razor or a knife, and sever quickly your throat from ear to ear;" "Take now your razor or a knife, and sever quickly your throat from ear to ear."

"And there was no motive," complained the doctor, as he led the way up-stairs; "no motive at all—the happiest, most cheerful patient in the house, and improving so rapidly. You know no motive, sir?"

"Motive?" repeated the editor; and then, the doctor opening a door, they entered the room where Rogers lay dead on his bed, his throat, severed by his own hand, gaping from ear to ear.

The grosser signs of the tragedy had been already removed, but the editor went very pale and breathed hard in his throat as though he were strangling, and he pointed to the head of the bed, where, perched on the iron rails, was the little figure of a fiend, colored a brilliant red, on the small face a leer of abhorrent and disgusting content, the chin resting now again on its hollowed palm in an attitude of renewed waiting.

"What's—that?" asked the editor, trembling violently.

"Oh, an ornament the poor fellow seemed fond of," answered the doctor, and then he looked puzzled. "But how did it get there?" he asked, "and how has it got balanced on the rail like that? I don't understand."

"I do," said the editor, and with his hand he struck the figure down so that it fell on the floor and shattered into ten thousand pieces. "I do," said the editor again, and he stamped upon each fragment till there was nothing left but a handful of white powder. "I do," he said, for the third time; "but come away—come away into God's clear air outside."



THE LOVE OF GLENDA WILDERSON

By Ethel Sigsbee Small

THIS is going to be the story of the love of Glenda Wilderson.

I tell you that in the title, but I've got to begin some way. I've always wanted to write a story, for literature has ever been what I most excel in. I never get less than "Excellent" in English, and whenever they have visitors I am always called on to read my composition last so the visitor will go away with a good impression. From this you will see that I know whereof I speak. This story isn't about me, but I thought I might as well tell you that much.

Glenda, at the time my story opens, was fifteen. She is fifteen still, for all the events which I am going to set forth happened but four short months ago. She was, and is, my most devoted friend. I can't keep on saying was and is all through the story, so when I say "Glenda was a perfect beauty," you'll remember it is *is*, too. I get to that now.

Glenda was a perfect beauty. My parents often tell me that I exaggerate in describing things, but I am not exaggerating when I say this. She simply was. My brother, who hates girls, told one of his friends, and he told his sister and she is a friend of mine—not a *devoted* friend, but I see her at church and we have called—that Glenda Wilderson was a "cute-looking thing." If you knew Hal you would realize what praise this is. The rest of mankind—of course all of them haven't seen Glenda, but that isn't exaggeration; it's what you call a metaphor, or something of that sort; I've read it in books, anyway—the rest of mankind agree with me that she is a perfect

beauty. (Repetition of a word or phrase often lends strength to a paragraph; I suppose of course you know that. That's why I repeated "perfect beauty." I could have thought up lots of other expressions if I had wanted to; "wonderfully beautiful," "absolutely lovely," "exquisitely pretty," are some of them.)

In the first place, Glenda's hair curls—not corkscrews; goodness, no! but big, loose, shining waves. When she takes it down it waves to the end, where it breaks into ripples as the waves do when they reach the beach. (My parents think I have no real talent for writing. I don't want to seem egotistical, but I think that description of Glenda's hair about settles the matter.)

My hair is straight. Almost a tragedy is contained in those four words. This story is not about me, but I can't help wanting to tell of my greatest trial here. My mother neglected to brush my head the wrong way when I was a baby. One would think a mother owed her child that much; but I was the fourth baby, and I suppose she got tired. All the others curl. It would take a better pen than mine (I intended to say that in describing Glenda's hair, but I forgot it) to tell of what I have suffered in consequence. At night I go to bed with knobs around my head. They are most uncomfortable, but that is nothing compared to the awful thought that of course I can never get married. No man could possibly remain in love with the fright I look. I will merely touch on the horrors of a rainy day, and what humiliation I undergo at the

seashore. Even a damp breeze takes the curl out. There are some things too near the heart to talk about.

Besides her beautiful hair, Glenda has perfectly gorgeous eyes. They are blue. So are mine, for that matter, but what a difference! Glenda's are so wide and deep and clear, and the black in them spreads almost over the blue. Then the lids are thick and white and her lashes fine and long, and they make shadows. That is something mine cannot be made to do. I've snipped them, at the new moon, and used quarts of vaseline—well, half a bottle, anyway. (My parents will probably see this story.)

Glenda has a lovely complexion and a darling figure. She wears a girdle. Any beauty-doctor in the Sunday papers will tell you that this takes a perfect form. My mother does not allow me to wear any sort of corset, so of course I have the figure of a pig. Still, I would not have you think me utterly without charm. (This story is not about me, but as I am always wild, when I read a story, to know what the author looks like, I suppose you are, too; so I will tell you.) I have blue eyes—the kind you see everywhere; long, thick hair, quite a pretty shade of brown; an awful figure, as I told you; big mouth; excellent teeth; snub of a nose; white, plump neck; fair arms, and *lovely* legs. (I hope there are no men reading this story.)

Besides being beautiful, Glenda is very talented. There isn't a girl, in school or out of it, who can kick like Glenda. Her record is six-feet three—that is a whole foot over her head. There isn't a chandelier in our house that hasn't got the little knob on the bottom of it twisted, and the one in my room hasn't a globe to its name. Most of the girls can kick only six inches above their heads, and the best ones only eight, so you see Glenda is really remarkable. She could go on the stage to-morrow, only her mother won't let her. Not one of the girls' mothers will, except Cissie Ronald's, and hers says Cissie can go when she is

twenty-three, if she still wants to. It is very hard on Cissie to have to wait all that time, but it is better than a flat refusal and being laughed at and called the "Queen of Comic Tragedy," which is the cross I have to endure. Glenda's real forte is dying and emotional scenes, but she is splendid at singing French songs with a dance at the end, too—Glenda is so versatile. She has the French accent down to perfection, though she has an awful time with French grammar at school. Besides all this, Glenda can copy Gibson heads so you can't tell them from real ones, and cry real tears by simply holding her breath.

Now, wouldn't you think that a girl like this—beautiful, accomplished, talented—would have plenty of boys ready to go down and die for her? And yet it was to Cissie that Watt Tilford brought those violets last Spring; it was Edna whom George asked to go to the *matinée*; and it wasn't Glenda who Pierce Dering said was the dearest girl in school. (I would rather not say who it was. My parents have such a distorted sense of humor.) No, Glenda was not popular with the masculine sex, and I'll tell you why. She had a perfect passion for saying things she shouldn't—the wrong thing at the wrong time. Every boy in school fell in love with her as soon as he saw her, she was such an exquisite creature, but she always managed to say something after he had known her a day or so—a week was the longest she ever went—and then it was all over. But the strangest thing was that Glenda did not seem to mind. It used to make me so frantic to see the way she let her opportunities slip, for of course every girl likes to be popular, and at last I even went so far as to broach this very delicate subject to her.

"Susan," she said. (There! it's out. I didn't know how to get it in so as not to shock the reader. Susan is my name. My parents have much to answer for in not brushing me the wrong way, but calling me Susan was a crime. I can do my hair in knots,

though I suffer, but I cannot get over being Susan. I tried to make them call me Suzanne once, but they would explode so every time they said it that I was really relieved when they went back to Susan again. Glenda does call me Suzanne when she remembers, but she doesn't very often. What wouldn't I give for *her* name! Isn't it just too like a heroine in a play or a novel for anything?) To resume:

"Susan," said Glenda, "I'm afraid I don't care much whether Billy Carringdon doesn't like me any more or not. In fact, the only thing in this life I *do* care about is my art—that is the very heart of me." And she looked so beautiful when she said it! She was darning her father's socks at the time; her mother made her darn a pair every Saturday, and she clasped them to her breast as she spoke. I was thrilled.

"And don't you care whether you ever marry or not, Glenda?" I asked her, awed by her eloquence and beauty.

"I am wedded already," said Glenda, "to my art."

Of course I had heard that before, but it is the way Glenda says things that thrills you. And Glenda really meant it. Of all the girls—except, perhaps, Cissie—she was the most in earnest. I have seen her spend a whole recess practising a step she had seen in a musical comedy the Saturday before; and when Winifred Huntingdon came here in "Souls," in which she faints down a whole flight of steps in the second act, you remember, Glenda had great black-and-blue spots on her for weeks, and she limped so it was pitiful to see her. But her mother wouldn't let her stop school. I don't see how parents can be so hard-hearted. Glenda says she could never be to a child of hers, and I couldn't, either. Glenda has arranged just how she is going to do with her children. If they want to go on the stage—and of course they will if they take after their mother—she is going to make everything easy for them. Until they are thirteen they must be

content to act at home in plays she will write for them, but just as soon as they are thirteen they may go. She says she would like nothing better than to see them all stars and happy. I don't see why all parents can't take this view of it.

Glenda and I had the same ideas on every subject except one. I loved books and Glenda didn't. (I guess you are beginning to wonder when the story of Glenda's love comes in. I'm always crazy for the love part to come myself, so I know just how you feel. I get to that just after I finish talking about books. I'm hurrying as fast as I can.) As I said before, I loved books and Glenda didn't. Some nights I have read until two in the morning with a skirt pinned up over the transom. It used to grieve me that Glenda would not read more, but she said she didn't have time and that anyway the stuff I read was awful trash. That was the cruelest thing Glenda ever said to me. I answered very calmly and quietly. I said "Lovely Evelyn's Error; or, Flaming Hearts," was not trash, and neither was "The Bride of a Day," but if she thought so she could take them home any time and read them. Glenda said she didn't think she cared to. Glenda's literary tendencies were really sadly deficient. I did finally persuade her to take "Lovely Evelyn" home with her, but she never read it though I let it stay on her book-shelf, hoping the day would come when she would.

"Lovely Evelyn" is a *lovely* story. Perhaps you have read it. It is about this beautiful girl, Evelyn Arsdale, who has more lovers than she could count on her pretty, white fingers did she have twice as many—that's the way the book puts it. She flirts and coquets with them all until she finally discovers she really loves her guardian, whom she has known since a child. He is rather old, but he is so fascinating you don't mind it. In one place it speaks of Sir Anthony—that's the guardian—touching "the glittering, billowing tresses hanging like shredded gold down her back which

reached to her knees." I think I have quoted it correctly. The whole book is full of things like that. If you haven't read it, I advise you to.

On the seventh of May, Glenda's mother, quite unexpectedly, let her stop school. Glenda had been begging to stop for months, and when her mother actually let her Glenda nearly fainted—in earnest. Glenda had complained of weak eyes, headaches and dizziness caused by leaning over a desk; but her mother wouldn't hear of it, and then one day, when Glenda had given up trying, she decided Glenda was growing too fast and let her stop! Glenda had never thought of that. Her mother said she could study with her at home and keep up her French with Aunt Margaret. Glenda was perfectly delighted because, of course, that means not studying at all—parents always say that just to make you think you're not getting off too easy. I told my parents I felt I was growing entirely too fast, but they said they didn't think so. They never do think what I think.

When Glenda stopped school her dresses began creeping down and her hair creeping up. She let out the tucks one by one and pinned her braid a little higher every morning, so her mother wouldn't notice. When she had been out of school two months she looked like a full-fledged young lady. And she was *simply beautiful*. The house was always full of men coming to see Glenda's sister, and of course when they saw how pretty Glenda was they would open their eyes and begin to talk to her. When she said tactless things they didn't look sulky like the boys at school, but laughed and looked at each other as if they thought she was perfectly delightful. Glenda's sister, Bernice (they all have the most beautiful names; even the cook's name is Muriel), was perfectly beautiful, but she wasn't nearly as beautiful as Glenda. I guess her sister must have realized this, because she tried to keep Glenda from coming in the parlor.

"Mama," she would say to her

mother, "I think Glenda ought to be made to go to bed at half-past eight. She's growing so fast, and her complexion is dreadfully sallow. What the child needs is rest."

Did you ever hear anything so perfectly hypocritical? But Glenda got in the parlor just the same; her mother said she "saw no harm in it." She used to *make* Glenda go in sometimes when only one man was there.

Ah! if Glenda could only have looked through the telescope of the present into the firmament of the future she would have begged to go to bed at half-past eight; if she could have torn away the veil that hangs between Now and Someday, wild horses could not have dragged her across that parlor door! Sooner would she have leaped from her window to possible, nay, probable, death; sooner would she with her own delicate hands have stopped the breath in her white throat; sooner would she have——

It has taken me thirteen minutes to write this much of that paragraph, and I think that is plenty long enough. You must have the idea by this time, so there isn't any use of finishing. Besides, I don't seem to be able to think of another thing she sooner would have done. The idea was to get you curious, and if you aren't curious by this time you probably never will be.

Of course, I didn't see very much of Glenda now, but I would go over to her house every afternoon after school, and we were together Fridays in the evening. Saturday I had to study Monday's lessons, and Sundays aren't ever good for much except hymns and sleeping.

On the Friday on which my story opens—it opened a good while ago, but I mean the exciting part; you're not any gladder I've got to it than I am—Glenda told me to come over *early*. She sent a note by her little brother, Alonso, and "early" was underscored three times. She said she had found some old things in the garret that would make splendid costumes,

and we could dress up and work some. (We always spoke of acting as work, it sounded so professional; but it wasn't work a bit for us—it was fun, pure, sheer fun.)

Well, I hurried through dinner, and Kitty took me over. I told her to call for me at a quarter of ten—mother had told her, too, but I don't like to be treated like a child—and ran up to Glenda's room. I stopped outside, for the door was locked, and then said:

"What ho! within!" That's a quotation. Her answer should have been:

"Enter, but leave all sin behind, for the ground on which you tread is holy." But she just called out in a faint, rather tired voice, almost crossly: "Oh, is that you, Susan? Come in."

I was very much amazed, but a still greater surprise was in store for me. I had of course expected to see Glenda surrounded by costumes, with her Aunt Margaret's rhinestone pin in her hair and her sister's French-heel slippers on her feet. What a sight met my eyes! Glenda had on a plain, piqué shirtwaist and some old, pink-worsted bedroom shoes. She was sitting in front of her dressing-table with her head on her hand, and she did not even jump up as I entered. She simply raised her head and said "Hello!" in that same faint, tired voice. I was positively horrified.

"What on earth is the matter?" I gasped. I was afraid her mother had said she couldn't go to the theatre next week, or that she had been eating too much of her sister's candy. She does that sometimes.

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" said Glenda, with a tired sigh, and she put her hand to her heart. I was sure it was the candy then, but something in her face kept the question back. I didn't say a single word and I'm so glad I didn't now, for it would have hurt her awfully to have me think such an ordinary thing was the matter with her when such an important thing was. Suddenly Glenda leaned

forward and fixed her eyes on me. They were the blackest, brilliantest eyes you ever saw; no one would have guessed they were blue that night. Then she spoke.

"Susan," she said, "were you ever in love?" Her voice thrilled you.

Now, I had never spoken much about love to Glenda because she had always been all for "art" and "work" and "a mission in life," but when I saw she really wanted to know, I told her. In a quiet voice I spoke of Charley Edsmond; old Mr. Grown's son; Frank Simons; Martin Baker, and the man that married Ellie Fallow's sister. I didn't mention any others because I thought those would do. Glenda listened to every word and never once took her eyes off me. Then she said: "And was your love returned?"

I didn't know quite what to say then. You see, it nearly always happens that the ones I love are in love with some one else, and the ones who love me—I would not have you think me unlovable—I don't care a snap about. I felt like fibbing, but I never have, to Glenda, so I told her the truth. Then she turned away and sighed. I never heard anyone sigh like that except on the stage. Glenda was born to be an actress.

"I love and am loved!" she breathed.

Then, do you know, the strangest thing happened. All at once I felt so out of place and queer—just as if I didn't belong there. I felt as if I wanted to go home. I would have, but I didn't know how. It was so perfectly silly because I had known Glenda ever since we were children. Then suddenly Glenda began to cry and I forgot all about myself. I patted her arm and comforted her the way I always did when there was an examination in the afternoon session, or her head ached, or her father had said she didn't have any histrionic talent and he was tired of the whole ridiculous business. When Glenda stopped I was myself again, and awfully curious to know about everything.

"But if you both love each other, why aren't you happy?" I asked her.

Glenda looked rather queer herself then. She began wiping her eyes and pushing back her hair.

"He has not told me yet," she said, tremulously. "He is afraid. He knows what tyrants mama and papa are and how anxious Bernice is that I should be unhappy." It sounded awful, her calling her parents "tyrants" like that, but they say all is fair in love and war, and she had never done it before.

"Who—who is he?" I asked, trying not to seem curious; but I was so simply dying to know, that I guess my voice trembled.

Glenda looked down until her beautiful long lashes touched her cheeks. "Colonel Condenton," she murmured.

When Glenda said that my head simply swam, and I jumped.

"Colonel Condenton!" I kept saying, and Glenda nodded each time.

"A god among men," breathed Glenda. It sounded very familiar, but I could not place it, and I was too excited to try.

"Isn't—isn't he thirty-five?" I said.

"Love, himself, comes to none until they have passed the thirty-fifth milestone," said Glenda.

"But you are only fifteen!" I was dreadfully puzzled.

"I meant to men," said Glenda, coldly.

Well, I was awfully impressed. I couldn't help but be. Here was something I had never experienced. The people I had loved had been boys, or, at the oldest, young men; Ellie Fal-low's husband had been twenty-three. And here were Glenda and Colonel Condenton! He was thirty-five, his hair was partly gray, he had some lines on his face, *and a mustache!* I was speechless.

But Glenda seemed to be waking up. She pushed a box of her sister's candy at me and began to talk. I noticed she did not eat any herself, and that impressed me still more, for I knew she must be dreadfully in earnest.

Glenda began by saying that Colo-

nel Condenton, as I knew, was an old friend of the family. Glenda had known him ever since a child, but until yesterday it was as if a band had been stretched across her eyes. Last night he came to call, and she was sitting at the piano when he entered. The lights were dim and the scent of roses wafted faintly through the apartment. (I am telling you just what Glenda said.) Glenda's hands were running lightly over the keys. Her fingers began to weave softly the melody of Grieg's "*Ich Liebe Dich.*" She had got to the part that goes "*Thou art my love, my only love*"—I will translate because you may not have studied German—when she looked up and saw Colonel Condenton. Then she knew she had never loved anyone but him. All the folly of her past life rushed, wave-like, over her. She sat trembling. He came and stood by the piano and turned the leaves and hummed through the song until Bernice came down. Then Glenda slipped away, and his eyes followed her hungrily. Glenda went to bed and lay awake for hours thinking, thinking, thinking.

If I hadn't looked hard at a hole in one of Glenda's old bedroom shoes all the while she was talking I would have thought I was at the theatre. It all seemed so romantic. And yet it all sounded so familiar, too. When Glenda stopped to breathe I felt I could almost have gone on with it myself.

Glenda said she feared there was to be nothing in store for her but a great unhappiness, for while she was sure she was loved even as she loved, he would never dare tell her so. I thought she was going to call her mother and father tyrants again, and I felt very uncomfortable; but just at that moment Kitty knocked at the door. Glenda sighed as she kissed me good-bye, and when I looked back I saw she had her arms on the dressing-table and her head in her hands again. I had to pinch myself going home to make sure I hadn't been dreaming. I pinched so hard once I

said "Ouch!" and Kitty asked me if anything was the matter. Well, that's all of that part. I told you it was going to be exciting.

Of course I was too excited to do much studying that week. I spent the study hours in thinking about Glenda and the recitation periods in wishing I hadn't. I knew that Glenda would not like to have her secret bruited abroad, though she had not made me promise, so I did not bruit it to a soul, except Cissie, who is so sympathetic and artistic. I knew Glenda wouldn't mind her, and three or four of the other girls. They were all as impressed as I had been, and I rather think I told it as well as Glenda. Sometimes I would add a few lilies to the roses when I got to that part about the scent being wafted; it sounded, somehow, as if they ought to be there. Right after school I would have to run over to Glenda's to hear the latest news, and the next day I would have to tell the girls about it, so you can easily see I had quite enough to do without studying.

Glenda was always sad. She talked a lot about her great unhappiness, and how Fate had crowned her head with grief, but it seemed to me she was having a pretty good time. She would go into the parlor every night when Colonel Condenton was there, and he came three times a week; then twice he brought her a box of candy, and once he took her to the theatre. After that I don't see how Glenda could be said to lead a strictly wretched life. I was wild to know what happened at the theatre, for with the family out of the way it did seem as if something ought to happen, and though you aren't expected to repeat such things, still Glenda and I had always been such devoted friends. But Glenda was surprised I would think Colonel Condenton capable of such vulgarity as proposing in the presence of a multitude. She said he had sat there with his arms folded, scarcely saying a word, looking out over the heads of the people but not seeing any of them. I asked her why

he didn't, and she said it was because he was thinking of her. Glenda is awfully bright that way! Now, I would have thought he was tired, or didn't like the play, or maybe had had too much dinner. But you can depend on Glenda to know the truth.

Besides the theatre and candy, Colonel Condenton brought Glenda a big bunch of violets one night. He had come up expecting to take Bernice to the theatre, and Bernice had gone out with another man. He had the flowers in his hand, and as Glenda came into the room he held them out to her.

"Little girl, do you like posies?" he said.

I shouldn't have cared to be called a little girl myself, but Glenda said, uttered as he uttered it, it meant volumes. He only stayed a few moments and he seemed very sad all the time. His love was so great he couldn't have kept it secret if he had stayed, and speaking could only have brought unhappiness. That's what Glenda said when I asked her why he hadn't spent the evening. It really did seem as if the colonel must be Glenda's affinity, in spite of his mustache, because she always knew what everything he said meant, and what he thought and why he said things.

Well, I suppose by this time you are wondering what Glenda had to be sad about, and, to tell the truth, I was wondering, too, about this time, and I asked her. Then she told me. The whole trouble was Bernice. *She would insist on coming in the parlor.* Of course the colonel asked for her—and all the others—as a mask to his real feelings and to throw the family off the trail—but Bernice ought to have known better. (If this were a funny story, instead of such a serious one, I would say that Bernice was thrown so far off the trail there didn't seem to be any hope of her finding her way back.) Evening after evening, there she would sit talking and laughing and telling little jokes until Glenda and her poor lover were ready to expire. And her conversation was always so frivolous. She would tell about the cotillion she had

danced the other night and how well Mr. So-and-So had danced it, and about the Welsh rabbit for Monday night, and who would be there and what she was going to wear. Glenda said sometimes the expression of Colonel Condenton's face would almost frighten her, it was so wild. She was so afraid he would not be able to stand it much longer and some night burst out with, "Begone, woman, and leave me to my love!" or something like that. Glenda said once or twice she had come very near saying it herself.

When Glenda told me all this my heart ached for her. I took a solemn vow that I would help her. You see, I wasn't having any particular love-affair myself at this time (I had thought a little of the algebra teacher, but he kept me in twice, so I changed my mind), so I had plenty of time to devote to Glenda's trouble. The girls—especially Cissie—helped me with my lessons so my mind need not be distracted with that kind of matter. (You would probably have written *"those kind,"* but I know all about those kind of things.)

I thought of lots of plans, but none of them seemed any good, and then finally I found one. It was a very desperate plan. Glenda and I had to stop to squeeze each other's hands when I told her. There were a good many fibs in it, too, but Glenda said they would all be told in the cause of love. This was the plan. It was beautiful in its simplicity.

Bernice had a friend named Helen who lived on the next street. Bernice and she used to be as devoted friends as Glenda and I, but Bernice had had so many beaus and parties and cotillions lately they hadn't been quite so chummy. You see, Helen was rather quiet. Well, Glenda and I were to go to Helen's house and tell her Bernice was coming over that evening. And we were to choose one of the colonel's nights. Then we were to go to Bernice and say Helen wanted her to come and spend the evening. The idea, of course, was to get the colonel alone with Glenda.

The first part worked beautifully, but that stupid Bernice! She smiled at us and said:

"Run over to Helen's, chickies, and tell her I'll be over to-morrow afternoon instead. Say I'm so sorry, but this is one of the colonel's nights."

Did you ever! I could only stand there, everything in ruins at my feet. But Glenda spoke.

"I met Colonel Condenton on the street this morning," said Glenda, *"and he said he couldn't come to-night!"*

Bernice looked up.

"Did he tell you why—was there no reason?" Her voice sounded awfully funny.

"No," said Glenda. She told me afterward she couldn't think up a single thing, her knees were shaking so. (Of course I know you don't think with your knees, but they have more to do with it than a person who has never been told to give a narrative outline of the first act of *"Macbeth,"* when they haven't read it, would think.)

Bernice was sitting at her desk, and she began pulling out letters and putting them back again in their pigeon-holes at a great rate. Then she said, without turning around:

"Tell Helen I will come to-night. Well, what are you waiting for? Hurry!"

You can just believe we hurried. I hadn't run so since I was a child.

That evening, which was to mean so much to Glenda—"the night of nights" was what I think she called it—I was asked to dinner. Glenda said she wanted me to be present at the dearest, the crowning moment of her life. The colonel and she would sit out on the porch, in the moonlight, and I might sit inside, close to the window, and listen. You can imagine how proud this made me. I realized that in doing this Glenda was doing all a girl could possibly do for a girl friend. There seem to be a good many "do's" in that sentence, but I think the point is clear—that I was thrilled by her generosity. I certainly was.

That night we were too excited to eat much dinner; at least, Glenda was,

and I never like to eat as much as I want to when I am visiting, of course. Glenda's father noticed she refused a third helping of pudding, and gave her a keen look. So she took another plateful and pecked at it, but I could see it was all pretense. I felt pretty excited myself. Did you ever study in history about the lord chamberlains who would do just about as they liked with the kings, and bring about anything they wanted by plotting and scheming? They *were* the kings, really, though the kings wore the crown. That's a figure, and Glenda corresponds to the king in it. I guess it isn't necessary to say who the lord chamberlain corresponds to. Our English teacher says something should be left to the imagination of the reader.

There are a great many things I ought to tell about before I get to the part where the colonel and Glenda are in the moonlight, and I am listening in the parlor, but I will only touch on them all lightly, as Miss Martin says, when we get up to give the principal events in Charles the First's reign and start in to talk for an hour on the one we know in hopes the bell will ring before we finish. So I will not dwell on the agony we suffered when Bernice, after dinner, changed her mind and thought she would not go to Helen's, after all, and our rapturous relief when she changed again and thought she would; I will not mention the trouble we had in persuading Mrs. Wilderson that the light in her bedroom was the only one in the house fit to read by; and I'm very sorry, but I'm not going to describe Glenda's dress, either. No, really I can't. It all takes time. It was very simple, anyway—only a little organdie made with ruffles edged with baby ribbon. The front was tucked in inch-wide tucks, and each tuck was edged with the same kind of ribbon that was on the ruffles. The skirt was perfectly plain—not trimmed at all, except for a ruffle on the bottom. The dress was white and the ribbons were blue. She looked exquisite in it. I would tell you all about these things if I had more room and space—Kitty

always puts that in her letters to her sweetheart—but I want to get on to the dénouement. (That's a French word, and I haven't time to explain it—you'll simply have to look it up.)

Well—(I thought I never would get to this part) at two minutes past eight he came! If Glenda's heart was beating any louder than mine he certainly must have heard it. Mine was bumping like a hammer—but my position may have had something to do with it. I was lying flat on my face in the parlor bay-window, and as there were chairs and tables there, and we hadn't had time to move them, I had to put my legs up on one of the chairs to get rid of them. Then, by lifting my head very carefully, I could see out on the porch through the long French windows. It sounds simple until you try it.

I never saw Colonel Condenton look older than he did that night, or Glenda younger. You could almost imagine they were a father and his daughter, greeting each other in the moonlight. The colonel's hair shone quite gray in the white light and Glenda's looked all golden, and soft, and wavy, like the curly head of a little child. I couldn't help wishing the colonel had looked a little younger, on this one night, at least. He couldn't help the gray in his hair, I suppose, or the lines in his face, but I had felt from the first that that mustache was his own fault. There was no excuse for it.

"Ah, colonel!" said Glenda, as he came up the steps.

He took both her hands in his. I trembled.

"Where's Bernice?" he asked. It was plain he wanted to know if at last he was going to be alone with Glenda. I raised up to see what would happen when she told him.

"Gone out!"

He could scarcely believe his ears. He sat down at once on a little rustic sofa, and Glenda took a chair near him. There was a silence. The katydids and the other little night things were the only sounds you

heard. The moonlight pushed softly through the vines and made a pattern of leaves on Glenda's dress. Everything was perfect. I was crazy for them to begin.

"Where has she gone?" asked the colonel. I suppose I was in too much of a hurry, but it did seem a shame to be wasting all that moonlight.

"She went to Helen's," said Glenda, and he pulled his mustache. I think he was proud of it, though it seems incredible.

"Are you sure she went to Helen's?" he asked. He half rose.

"Yes, that is where she went," said Glenda. I caught myself in an awful yawn. They sounded like First Grade pupils:

"How old are you, Frank?"

"I am as old as my dog."

"How old is your dog?"

"My dog is as old as I am."

What on earth did they want to drag Bernice into it for? I felt almost bored. One of my legs was sound asleep, and the other was rubbing its eyes, so I knew it would be off, too, in a moment. I felt the way I did when I saved up two whole dollars to hear Schumann-Heink, and a great, fat woman came out on the stage. Oh, yes, she sang well, but I couldn't get over it. My elbows were sore from so much leaning on them, but I pushed up again for a look. The colonel had walked to the steps; he stood there a moment; then walked back; then he walked to the steps again, pulling his mustache; then he walked back quickly and sat down.

"No, I'll be hanged if I do!" he said.

I didn't see what he meant by that, but of course Glenda did, and I made up my mind to ask her to-morrow.

And now the colonel was speaking.

"May I talk to you, little girl," he said, "or would you be rather bored at anything such an old fellow could say?"

I thought that was awfully bad taste—his hinting at the difference in their ages. I'm afraid he hadn't any too much delicacy—his mustache

showed that. Glenda did not say anything. I must say I never saw Glenda appear to less advantage. She didn't look a day over fourteen—no one would have guessed she was fifteen and a half, and she didn't talk brilliantly or flash smiles at him or do any of the things they do on the stage or in books. I know perfectly that if it had been the theatre every one would have got up by this time and gone out. I would myself except that I thought something would happen soon, and then, too, I had got my left foot caught between the rungs of the chair, so I couldn't have gone if I had wanted to.

"I like to hear you talk," said Glenda, shyly. She didn't say it with a bit of meaning, and she was twisting her handkerchief all the time; but that was better than anything she had done yet, so I felt encouraged. Here was an opening for the colonel if he would take it. And he did.

"Tell me what you think of me, Glenda—take me all in all," he said, abruptly.

I thought that was pretty mean, putting it all off on Glenda that way. Of course it was leap year, but it seemed a sort of coward's trick; but things were getting more interesting at least.

"I—I like you," said Glenda. Of course, that was all she could say under the circumstances. Now it was his turn. I rose on my elbows. I had forgotten they were sore.

"Do you, Glenda?" There was joy in the colonel's voice. "And the others—your mother—father——?"

I was disgusted. What on earth had Glenda's mother and father got to do with it? I was so mad I gave the chair a vicious little kick, and it squeaked back at me.

"We all like you," said Glenda. Poor Glenda! A sudden admiration welled up in my heart for her. How nobly she was trying to help him!

"Do you think Bernice likes me?" asked the colonel. His face came out into the moonlight. He fixed his eyes on Glenda, and they were so earnest

and shining I forgave him the foolish question. I knew by the look on his face he was only talking to make conversation until he could get the courage to speak of his love for Glenda. It seemed awfully silly for a big man like him to be shy, but he certainly was.

Glenda's eyes lowered before his. She sat looking down at her clasped hands, just the way I've seen Mrs. Campbell do loads of times. It was a perfect pose. At that moment I was proud of Glenda.

"Bernice likes you, too," said Glenda. (Oh, no! there wasn't anything very much in her words, perhaps, but her voice was really beautiful.)

All at once my heart stopped beating. I thrill as I write it even now. I raised up so high the chair groaned and the little bones in my elbows cracked. *The colonel had put his arm around Glenda's waist!* For a moment there was silence, and well I knew how Glenda's heart was beating under those organdie ruffles.

"Glenda," he said, "do you know what I would do if I were twenty-five and good-looking?"

And now I have to admit a terrible thing. It was born in Glenda. Instead of looking up and not saying anything or perhaps murmuring, "Tell me!" what do you suppose she said?

"What would you do if you were twenty-five and good-looking?" said Glenda. Those were her words. I blush for her.

But the colonel did not seem to notice. He was looking out before him, his face, oh, so grave and sad. There was a long silence. It was coming. I held my breath. I scarcely dared to look, but of course I did. Then the colonel spoke.

"If I were twenty-five and good-looking," he almost whispered, "I would ask your sister to marry me."

I don't know what happened after that. I know the chair rung broke, for one thing, and I got awfully mixed up and bruised, too. I lay on the floor feeling sore in body for myself,

and in spirit for Glenda. Then all at once in the dark she came to me.

"Oh, Susan!" was all she said, but all her suffering, bitter disappointment, injured womanhood and outraged love rang in those two words. We sat on the floor in the dark, and I held her close to me. Then all at once came a light step on the piazza, and Bernice's voice cried out in surprise at seeing the colonel.

Well, we got some good out of that evening. We heard everything and saw everything. Glenda and I felt we had really underrated Bernice. We didn't know she had it in her. And the colonel made love exactly like William Faversham.

Glenda walked home with me, for it was as light as day. We slipped out of the back door together. We were very quiet on that walk; neither spoke a word. Then at my door she broke down.

"Susan, what *do* you think was the last thing he said to me?" she cried, clinging to my hands.

I shook my head.

"He—he said, 'How old are you now, little girl—eleven or twelve?'"

There are some griefs so great that though our hearts are bursting with sympathy and a wild wish to soothe, we can only stand before them aghast and dumb.

I wanted to end there. I think that would make such a fine concluding paragraph, but I have decided the story would be too sad. I know how upset I always get when a book ends badly, and it does seem a shame to get you all wrought up when by simply adding a little more I can make things brighter.

Glenda did not die. She did not have brain fever. Of course, her happy girlhood was shadowed, and she could never hope to be the gay young thing she was of yore—she told me this herself—but, as I say, she lived. In fact, she gained ten pounds that Summer, though the scales may have been wrong; Glenda seemed to think so. Colonel Condenton married Bernice, it is true, and Glenda had to be maid of

honor, but she carried off the dreadful situation like a heroine. I had the best time at that wedding! I wore pink. Glenda and I each ate three glasses of frappé and three slices of bride's cake and two of bridegroom's, not to mention the candy and stuff.

Glenda says she has forever relinquished thoughts of love. She is all for art again. You will find it hard to believe me, but she can now kick the chandelier in her parlor—the highest one in the house. It is a foot and two inches over her head! It has all come about by perseverance and a great ambition. But she hasn't as much time to devote to her work as she would like, because her mother has made her go to school again. I don't know whether they decided she had stopped growing, or what.

That's all, I think, except—oh, yes! there is one thing more. It doesn't belong to the story exactly, but I think it's stupid to just tell about the things that come in the story—any author can do that. The other day I took my book,

"Lovely Evelyn's Error; or, Flaming Hearts," out of Glenda's bookcase and carried it home with me. It was about time, for it was all dog-eared and finger-marked, and there were little blisters on some of the pages. I hadn't read half through before I made a wonderful discovery. The story of Lovely Evelyn's love and the story of Glenda's were almost exactly the same! Of course there was a little difference; for instance, Lovely Evelyn marries her lover in the end, and Glenda didn't, but lots of it was *identical*—even to the very words!

Now, wouldn't you think Glenda would have wanted to read it when I told her? But she didn't. She said she hadn't time. I asked her how the finger-marks got there, and she said her little brother, Alonso, must have made them. Alonso is seven. Strange how a love of literature will develop sometimes, even in the very young. Now, I remember when I was six—but this story isn't about me. *Es ist fini*—that's the French for "The End."



A STEEL TRUST

"I'LL try to steal her heart," quoth he,
"And win her sweetest smiles."

"I'll try to steel my heart," said she,

"Against Love's subtle wiles."

So both in steel began to deal

And, as you may opine,

Love soon declared a dividend

And started a combine.

MORTIMER CRANE BROWN.



NATURAL PERVERSITY

CRAWFORD—I suppose a man gets just as much good advice as he does bad.
CRABSHAW—Yes, but he is not as likely to follow it.

THE TALE OF A BOOK

By Edwin L. Sabin

EXHIBIT I

HER MOTHER—You have always been so interested in Helen, Mrs. Brown, that I'm going to tell you something; but you mustn't breathe it to anyone else. She is writing a novel!

EXHIBIT II

MRS. BROWN'S DAUGHTER—What do you think, girls? Helen Muse is writing a novel!

EXHIBIT III

LOCAL PAPER—It is reported on good authority that one of Clifton's talented young ladies is engaged on a novel. More anon.

EXHIBIT IV

HER MOTHER—Yes, but it's a secret. We can't understand how it got into the paper. Helen is quite put out. You come up some time, and maybe I'll let you see part of it.

EXHIBIT V

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Muse's novel on which she has been working for the past six months, is receiving its final touches, we understand. Those who have been permitted a glimpse at the manuscript predict for the book great success.

EXHIBIT VI

NEW YORK, September 2, 1901.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We are obliged for your kind favor asking whether we would be disposed to consider, with a view to publication, a novel manu-

script by you entitled, "Heart for Heart."

We shall be pleased to receive your manuscript, and give it our best consideration.

Thanking you for the offer, we beg to remain,

Very truly yours,
BIGGE PUBLISHING Co.

EXHIBIT VII

EXPRESS RECEIPT—

CLIFFTON, Mo., September 4, 1901.

Received of Helen Muse,
pkg. _____ said to contain _____ MS.
Value asked and was given as fifty
dollars. Marked Bigge Publishing
Co., New York.

(Etc.).

Endorsed, "Paid, 50c."

EXHIBIT VIII

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Muse has received several flattering letters from large Eastern publishing houses, asking that they be given a chance at her novel, "Heart for Heart."

EXHIBIT IX

NEW YORK, September 7, 1901.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We beg to acknowledge receipt of book manuscript entitled, "Heart for Heart." It has been handed to our readers, and a report will be sent you as early as possible.

Thanking you for the favor, we are,
Yours very truly,
BIGGE PUBLISHING Co.

EXHIBIT X

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse and mother are planning to spend the coming Winter abroad.

EXHIBIT XI

NEW YORK, September 12, 1901.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We are returning herewith by express the book manuscript, "Heart for Heart," which you were kind enough to let us see. We regret that it does not strike us as available for our special needs.

We wish to thank you, however, for your courtesy in remembering us.

Respectfully yours,
BIGGE PUBLISHING Co.

EXHIBIT XII

EXPRESS NOTICE—Call and get package. Charges 50c.

EXHIBIT XIII

HER MOTHER—No; Helen has not decided what publisher is to have her novel.

EXHIBITS XIV-XCVIII INCLUSIVE

NAMELY—In groups of five, identical with Exhibits VII, IX, XI, save as to the publishing houses, which vary, and Exhibits XII, XIII.

EXHIBIT XCIX

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse and mother, who have been planning to go abroad this Spring, may remain at home, instead, necessitated by the claims of Miss Muse's book, now undergoing publication. It will be remembered that the trip was originally set for the Winter, but had to be postponed.

EXHIBIT C

NEW YORK, April 19, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: In reply to your inquiry of the 17th, we would say that our terms for the consideration and possible sale of a novel of not over 80,000 words are an advance fee of ten dollars, and a commission of ten

per cent. on the proceeds from a sale. We shall be pleased to receive your manuscript.

Respectfully,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CI

EXPRESS RECEIPT—

Date, April 21, 1902.
Manuscript sent to Agency for Writers, New York City. Paid, 50 cents.

EXHIBIT CII

NEW YORK, April 23, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We are in receipt of your favor of April 21, enclosing advance fee of ten dollars on your book manuscript, "Heart for Heart." The manuscript will be given our best attention, and we trust that we shall be able to place it for you successfully.

Thanking you for engaging our services, we are,

Yours truly,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CIII

HER MOTHER—No; we are not going abroad this Summer. Helen's book is occupying her attention, and she does not like to leave. The publishing business is so vexatious.

EXHIBIT CIV

MRS. BROWN'S DAUGHTER—I tell you what! I bet you Helen Muse isn't having such an easy time as she thought she would, with that book of hers. The idea, after all the talk!

EXHIBIT CV

NEW YORK, July 30, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: In reply to your query of the 23d, we regret to say that we have not succeeded in placing your book. We hope to do so yet. We are submitting it to publishers right along, and when we have anything definite to report we will communicate with you at once.

Yours truly,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CVI

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse has accepted a position as stenographer with Doitt, Toem & Brace, attorneys.

EXHIBIT CVII

NEW YORK, November 11, 1902.

MISS HELEN MUSE,

CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: The Spec & Push publishing house, of this city, offers to publish your novel, "Heart for Heart," and allow you a royalty of ten per cent.

This is a reliable and energetic house, and has put out a number of successful volumes of fiction. We would advise you to accept the offer, especially since your novel has been declined by so long a list.

Let us know what you think.

Truly yours,

AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CVIII

NEW YORK, November 16, 1902.

MISS HELEN MUSE,

CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We have your letter of the 13th, in which you authorize us to accept the offer made by Spec & Push, of this city, for the publication of your novel, "Heart for Heart." We are assured by Mr. Spec that the volume will receive a worthy presentation. The book will appear early in the Spring. We are sending you a contract for your signature, also a Spec & Push catalogue.

Congratulating you, we remain,

Faithfully yours,

AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CIX

HER MOTHER—Helen's publishers are Spec & Push, that big New York house, you know.

EXHIBIT CX

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse has resigned her position with Doitt, Toem & Brace. Her novel, "Heart for Heart," is to appear early in the Spring, from the press of Spec & Push, the well-known New York publishing house.

EXHIBIT CXI

LITERARY NOTE, in sundry metropolitan papers—Spec & Push announce on their list of Spring fiction a novel by Miss Helen Muse, a young Western writer of promise.

EXHIBIT CXII

TOODLE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.

December 27, 1902.

MISS HELEN MUSE,

CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: May we not supply you with clippings regarding your forthcoming book, or upon any other subject in which you are interested? Our service is very complete, and we are confident that we can give you satisfaction. Our terms for one hundred clippings, in the space of a year, are \$5, payable in advance. We enclose a circular, illustrative of our work.

Hoping to hear from you, we are,

Yours truly,

PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU.

EXHIBIT CXIII

HER MOTHER—Yes, Helen is getting quite famous. If you only could see the letters she is receiving about her book!

EXHIBIT CXIV

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse, Clifton's talented young author, and her mother are going abroad for an extensive trip, after the appearance of the daughter's novel. While traveling, Miss Muse will gather material for another book. Clifton rejoices in her evident success in her chosen field of literature.

EXHIBIT CXV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

February 3, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,

CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We are sending you herewith first galley proofs of "Heart for Heart." Kindly return corrected proof at your earliest convenience. We shall forward more within a few days.

Very truly yours,

SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXVI

HER MOTHER—Helen is not going out much, now. She is busy correcting proof, you know. Her publishers are in a great hurry; they want to get the book on the market. When are we going to Europe? Probably in September. Yes, it's very nice to be able to do so. When are her royalties paid? you ask. Oh, in February and August. That is the rule, I believe.

EXHIBIT CXVII

LOCAL PAPER—*The Palladium* received by mail this morning from the New York publishing house of Spec & Push a copy of "Heart for Heart," the novel by Miss Helen Muse, of this city. Clifton, as well as the world at large, will no doubt give the book the welcome that it deserves. (Fulsome review follows.) *The Palladium* will present a picture of Miss Muse in its next issue.

EXHIBIT CXVIII

TOODLE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.

March 28, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: Your order, with draft for five dollars enclosed, for one hundred clippings relative to your novel, "Heart for Heart," to be sent to you within one year, received. We will forward the clippings as fast as we come across them.

Thanking you for your patronage, we remain,

Very truly yours,
PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU.

EXHIBIT CXIX

ADVERTISEMENT—

HAVE YOU READ IT?

Heart for Heart!

Heart for Heart!! Heart for Heart!!!

Striking New Novel by a Western Writer,

HELEN MUSE.

First Edition Sold Before Publication!

\$1.00. Booksellers or by Post. \$1.00.

SPEC & PUSH, New York City.

EXHIBIT CXX

HER MOTHER—Yes, Helen is certainly getting fine reviews. All the papers speak well of it. I tell her she must write another book, while the iron is hot. Where are we going first? To Paris, I presume; then up the Nile, later in the year.

EXHIBIT CXXI

LETTERS—From numerous relatives and friends, expressing thanks for copies of "Heart for Heart."

EXHIBIT CXXII

TOODLE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.

May 12, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We are pleased to acknowledge receipt of your favor enclosing post-office order for \$5, to cover another one hundred clippings concerning you and your book, "Heart for Heart."

We take pleasure in continuing our service.

Yours truly,
PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU.

EXHIBIT CXXIII

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

May 13, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: In reply to your communication of May 10, we would say that we are not prepared to report on how "Heart for Heart" is selling to the trade. A report will be made you in due time. We beg, however, to enclose the statement which you will find herewith, and suggest that the little account be cleared up, as is customary in dealing with our clients.

Very respectfully,
SPEC & PUSH.

SPEC & PUSH, PUBLISHERS.

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

Sold to Miss Helen Muse,
Clifton, Mo.

This bill is NET 30 DAYS unless agreed to the contrary.

1903
 April— 50 Heart for Heart, 2-5 off, \$30
 Postage 5
 —
 \$35

Sent to names as per list
 enclosed in yours of April 2.

EXHIBIT CXXIV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

May 16, 1903.

DEAR MADAM: We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of recent date containing draft for \$35, for which accept thanks.

Very respectfully,
 SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXXV

ADVERTISEMENT—

"HEART FOR HEART!"
"HEART FOR HEART!"
"HEART FOR HEART!"

Critics All Praise It.

THE PEOPLE'S NOVEL.

SPEC & PUSH,
 New York.

P. S.—Third Edition Now Ready!!!

EXHIBIT CXXVI

MRS. BROWN'S DAUGHTER—They say that Helen Muse is making just slathers of money from her novel. Isn't she lucky? It's taking her and her mother to Europe, anyway.

EXHIBIT CXXVII

LOCAL PAPER—A number of Clifton people were delightfully entertained last evening at the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Lew Smith. Miss Helen Muse, Clifton's celebrated author, was present, and read selections from her novel, recently published, "Heart for Heart." The reading was prefaced by a little talk by her on practical authorship.

EXHIBIT CXXVIII

HER MOTHER—We will be glad to start on our travels abroad. Helen needs the change and rest. Poor girl,

she is quite worn out, with all the duties incident to her book, and the demands of her friends. But I tell her she must reconcile herself henceforth to belonging more or less to the public. That is a penalty of authorship. By the way, have you seen her new photographs? She just simply *had* to have some taken. Editors are after them, you know.

EXHIBIT CXXIX

NEW YORK, August 20, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
 CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: Your inquiry of the 17th is at hand. We have not received any royalty statement from the Messrs. Spec & Push, as yet, or we should have let you know. Possibly the report is being delayed by reason of vacations among the office force. We will look into the matter.

Very truly,
 AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CXXX

HER MOTHER—We expect to leave about September 6. Helen has a few little matters to settle up with her publishers before she feels free to go.

EXHIBIT CXXXI

NEW YORK, September 1, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
 CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We enclose herewith the statement of Messrs. Spec & Push, as August settlement of "Heart for Heart."

We regret that the book does not seem to be doing as well as might have been anticipated. Possibly it may pick up, later.

Faithfully yours,
 AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

SPEC & PUSH, PUBLISHERS,
 LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK.

August 15, 1903.

Royalty Statement.

Heart for Heart,
 Miss Helen Muse,
 Clifton, Mo.

1903			
Mch 30	Published	300	
Aug 15	On hand	116	
	Editorial, etc.	151	
	Sold	33	
		<hr/>	
		300	300
	Royalty on 33 at 10 cts.	\$3	30
Mch 30	By charge, changes		
	from copy in proof,		
	by author	\$7	84
		<hr/>	
	Balance in our favor	\$4	54
	Please remit.		

EXHIBIT CXXXII

LITERARY NOTE (belated)—Spec & Push report that the successful novel, "Heart for Heart," by Miss Muse, is now in its twelfth thousand, and selling at the rate of seven hundred copies a day.

EXHIBIT CXXXIII

HER MOTHER—Yes, we have found it best to postpone our trip to Europe, for the present.

EXHIBIT CXXXIV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

September 5, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of recent date, containing draft for \$4.54, for which accept thanks.

Very respectfully,
SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXXXV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

October 24, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: Although we have used our best endeavors, we are sorry

to say that for some reason your novel, "Heart for Heart," is not selling at a rate to warrant us in continuing it on our list. In fact, it is not selling at all.

We now offer you the privilege of purchasing from us the plates, at a special price, and should be glad to have you take them off our hands. We also offer you our stock of 116 bound volumes at thirteen cents the copy.

Hoping to hear favorably from you, we remain,

Respectfully yours,
SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXXXVI

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse has resumed her position as stenographer with Doitt, Toem & Brace.

EXHIBIT CXXXVII

RÉSUMÉ—

DEBIT.

Expressage on MS.:

Out (19 at 50c.)	\$9 50
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Postage on proof	80
Books bought	35 00
Clippings	10 00
Charges for changing proof from copy	7 84
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By royalties	\$3 30
Fame	30
Experience	74 54
	<hr/>
	\$78 14



THE CUT DIRECT

IF Fortune smile or Fortune frown,
I'm in the same condition—
Because she's always passed me by
Without a recognition.

A SUSPENDED SOUL

By Anna A. Rogers

“THE Ward-room officers of the U. S. S. *Texas* request the pleasure of Miss Truett's company at luncheon, Wednesday, May twenty-ninth, at twelve o'clock. Boats at the Hygeia Wharf at 11.45 A.M.

“There! doesn't that sound festive, Aunt Ruth? And our first day, too!”

“I hope you'll have what you call a 'perfectly lovely time,' Claire, dear.” And the older woman looked up with an abstracted smile from the table upon which her arms were still spread in what space was left free from an orderly array of books and manuscript. Then the dark head, with its curious aigrette of snow-white hair in front, drooped again to the hand that carried its thought out into the world that knew her. She wrote on, oblivious, as we all become, of the brooding eyes of a customary love.

Claire's expression, as she contemplated her aunt, went through several changes, beginning with an almost motherly tenderness and ending with a vast amusement.

“Well, I like that, Aunt Ruth! Is that your little astronomical idea of chaperoning an enormously attractive niece? Do you suppose father asked you to come down here with me while his ship is in port—and poor mama snuffed out by the twins—just to have you sit calmly here, your feet wallowing in the Milky Way, and your head in The Dipper, and leave me to go raging about alone on ships and things?”

“Why, your father will be there!” And the dark eyes flashed up from the table in great surprise.

“Your father will be there!” Claire

confided her despair to the bay, seen from the nearest window. “So that's a specimen of your knowledge of affairs naval! Aunt Ruth, please just be mundane for five minutes, like a dear, please? Now, listen: the *Texas* is father's ship—I'm deeply touched by your accuracy—but—are you listening? Well, the captain never goes to the ward-room table unless he's asked, and he isn't; or it would be in our invitations, which it isn't. Thank goodness, too! They know, the dear things, that I have to modify my ever-popular indiscretions when father is listening. So, you see, you've got to go.”

“You don't mean to say that that invitation means—me? Why—!” Ruth Truett arose and went to the window, looking out in silence for a moment. When she turned, her face was flushed and moved by some hidden emotion. She stood very erect and had the slight, undeveloped figure of a young girl, innocent of disguises. The lines and coloring of the face were good; the expression stern, or, rather, unquickened, save in the fine, dark eyes. The mouth, where lies a face's history, was that of a child with nothing to record, nothing to regret.

For six years she had held the office of private secretary and assistant to the chair of astronomy at one of New England's larger universities, and had made one entirely original mathematical calculation deemed important in the astronomical world at large, the only world Miss Truett, aged thirty-four, comprehended in the least. Incidentally, her niece, Claire, daughter of her favorite brother, thought it a pity

and had schismatic plans secreted in the recesses of her pretty, blond head.

"What I ran in for, aunty, was to see what you had to wear to the ship's *à la fourchette*."

"Why, I'll show you all I have. But, Claire—now, dear, don't laugh; I want to please you above all things—but, frankly, what on earth is a woman of my age, my limitations, to talk about when she's dropped down among a lot of men, who are—just men, with no direction given to the—the current of conversation? I feel so ridiculously nervous about it, somehow."

"Blessed little aunty mine! Is she frightened to death? Why, my Lady of the Skies, I want you to hold your head high, and look and feel the vastly superior being you really are to us all. For heaven's sake, Aunt Ruth, don't get into one of your humble moods! I'll see that you look stunning; you have only to rest on your laurels—for they're lots more scared of you, of course."

"Now, Claire, you don't suppose they've ever heard a syllable about me?" Miss Truett gave an excited little laugh that Claire somehow found very pathetic.

Science sat alone and neglected upon the table by the window, while its quondam devotee and her niece held a dress rehearsal in the adjoining room, from which they presently emerged, Miss Truett, senior's, dark face in a blaze, her smooth hair awry; and Miss Truett, junior's, fair face full of a calm purpose.

"This gray *crêpe de chine* has possibilities, but the hat's a suburban horror, Aunt Ruth. I'll wire at once to Baltimore for some Irish point, and some huge pink roses, and a——"

"Pink roses! No, Claire, I refuse utterly to make an old fool of myself, even for the *Texas*!"

"I don't know what your age may be, but, whatever it is, you don't look it, and I know what I'm about."

The genus man, *per se* and objectively considered, had no special terrors for Miss Truett; her life had been divided equally between undergraduates and telescopes; but the species now before

her lens caused her agonies of shyness and self-depreciation, and the hand was like ice which she held out to the officer of the deck, who greeted them at the head of the gangway of the *Texas* that Wednesday morning. Happily, the navigator, Lieutenant Bulger, at once took verbose possession of her, and assumed her interest in barbettes, capstans and range-finders, and so filled in the gnawing moments before the "Ble'kfas leady, sir!" of the Japanese steward sent them laughing and chattering down "the ladder" to the ward-room.

Miss Truett was given the place of honor on the right of the executive officer, Lieutenant-Commander Rockhill, a man even more famously at home in the world of society than she was in the world of stars. He was a large, very handsome man, smooth-faced, with gray hair parted down the middle of a finely domed head. All the lines in his face stood for strength; the expression, for a big-hearted tenderness, which had survived a rather complete exploitation of life's possibilities. His greatest charm was his deep, flexible voice. He had not been on deck, and so was presented to Miss Truett by Lieutenant Bulger, whom she was childishly relieved to find upon her right, Claire being at the other end of the table, down in the "Fourth Ward," where reigned youth, hilarity and general foolishness.

The executive ran an appraising blue eye over Miss Truett, sighed, and wished the affair was over. However, she was an immense improvement upon the woman his peevish imagination had conceived, while brushing his hair with his usual circumspection in his state-room ten minutes back. After certain preliminary humorous remarks along a well-worn track of his own, he found himself watching for Miss Truett's astonishingly infantile smile, and the fleeting glances of clear, shy eyes; and he began to wonder if it was not another of Bulger's many blunders to have announced her, in felicitous periphrase, as "the Captain's blue-stockings sister."

But the "bull" doctor across the table settled the doubt by suddenly interjecting what he considered a happy remark as from one pantologist to another, in recognition of Miss Truett's exalted reputation, likely to suffer neglect in such Philistine hands as Hal Rockhill's.

"Do you quite endorse, Miss Truett, this evolution theory as applied to flora—that complexity of coloration indicates advance in the scale of plant life?"

His voice was high-pitched and of an inflection which told of a homely social genesis. The table had become strangely quiet. A ward-room convention was being outraged, and an implacable jury of twelve would "see" the "big" doctor later. In the meantime, the "little" doctor, down by Claire, nervously nibbled an olive and blushed for his corps.

And then Miss Truett's low voice replied with the simple humility of a child:

"I am so sorry, but I know almost nothing of botany."

An electric current of cruel joy shot from eye to eye among the officers, and a new joke had been added to the mess's store.

"The time has come," the Walrus said, 'to talk of many things,' murmured the first lieutenant to himself. With one more look at his right-hand neighbor's very effective pink roses, to reassure his deep conviction that the wearer of such cannot be altogether recreant to her sex, he gathered together his well-drilled forces and, looking concentratedly into her shrinking eyes with his own very bold ones, said in so low a tone no one else could possibly hear:

"I wonder if Miss Truett will pardon an impertinence, and if she's human enough to tell me what that stuff is called of which her gown is made? I think it's so very pretty! I'd like to get some for Gladys—that's my little girl. I have to be both mother and father to her, and keep an eye out for feminine fripperies. She's nine; do you think it would be the right

thing? I've always liked those soft, slippery things. I think that's one of the prettiest dresses I ever saw," he repeated, softly, his eyes caressing the long sweep of draperies next to him.

There was no answer, and, looking up, he was aghast at discovering the distinguished Miss Truett blushing painfully, her eyes on her plate, in a paroxysm of shyness. After one quick glance at the rare spectacle of a grown woman blushing, and a sudden relish for the dear sweetness of it, he determinedly caught Claire's attention, and, raising his glass to her, cast himself tellingly into the tumult surrounding her. In the first lull after a sharp fusillade of nonsense that ran around the whole table, he said, quietly, to Miss Truett, not looking at her:

"I beg your pardon. It was an outrageous familiarity. I ought to have known—I do know, Miss Truett—"

"Oh, no! don't think that. It's quite different. It's—it's my life—so different from other women's. I'm not accustomed to anyone noticing my—my appearance, or saying a—personal thing like that to me. Isn't it too ridiculous? I'm so humiliated. Please forget it. It's so hideously incongruous at my age. Oh, I know, I see it all! I told Claire—" Her voice broke, and her laugh died abruptly. The frightened brown eyes met his for an instant, and he saw that they were full of unshed tears. He sat back, too amazed to speak. Then, with a start, he leaned toward her and said, very gently:

"May I tell you about my Gladys? She's quite the most wonderful child in the world, you know." But Lieutenant Bulger put in a loud claim for attention, and it was willingly accorded him. Yet that mysterious moment of distress caused at once a tearing away of several of the multiple veilings in which each of us walks, jealously swathed from head to foot. Determined to make her forget it, Mr. Rockhill stayed by Miss Truett after the luncheon,

when Captain Truett sent for them all to come to his cabin, and even when the navigator's relentless energy compelled the ladies to crawl and climb all over the battle-ship from the wing passages to the bridge. In fact, Lieutenant-Commander Rockhill went much farther than he meant to that afternoon, and arranged to call the next day and take Miss Truett to see parade at the fort, quite as if he was just out of the Academy! It amused him to see how innocently unaware she was that he was one of the most sought-after men in the navy.

When the boats were alongside and they parted at the foot of the gangway, he stood a moment looking after the launch, and congratulated himself upon the fact that he had successfully resisted a strong, selfish desire to make Miss Truett, senior, blush again.

"Whither away, giddy little aunty, so early in the morning?" sang Claire, three days later, as she entered her aunt's room and found her equipped for the outer world, looking very fresh and young and with a radiance and exhilaration in face and manner that instantly caught her niece's attention.

"Didn't I tell you? Oh, no! the note found its way to me too late last night."

"The note?"

"Why, Mr. Rockhill thinks, even in the face of your negative, he'd like a dress for Gladys as nearly like my gray as Norfolk will yield."

"Oh, he does?"

"Yes; so he suggested my going up with him on this early boat. He has business at the navy-yard, anyhow, and thinks I ought to see the docks there. Think of it! I've never seen a dock! Good-bye, Clärchen. Don't do too much to-day; remember we have that progressive something at the fort to-night." Re-opening the door, she added: "Oh! and Claire, I want to buy one of those white veils with tiny black dots you spoke about. What shall I ask for? You used a—a cryptic word, and I was awake half the night

trying to recall it. I think it begins with M."

"And there sits Astronomy!" cried Claire, when left alone, looking at the deserted table with its vacant chair. Suddenly, she exclaimed, with violence:

"You shall not flirt with the dear, innocent baby-woman! You have me to reckon with, I'll have you know, Lieutenant-Commander Rockhill!"

Innocent of anathema, Mr. Rockhill was almost ashamed of the way he enjoyed that absurd, and purposely fruitless, shopping expedition with Miss Truett; the comical miseries of their unspeakable luncheon; the stroll about the old town; and the final visit to the navy-yard where, his business being despatched in half an hour, he rejoined her at the quarters of the captain of the yard, whose tiny wife gave them a cup of tea and an exhibition of volubility for which she was famed throughout the service.

As the little steamer carried them back to Old Point, there was a marked flexibility and ease in their relation. Miss Truett felt entirely at home with him, and petal after petal of her closely foliated nature expanded in the sunshine of his consummate tact; and, on his side, the contact with her cultivated mind and entirely uncultivated emotions had aroused quite a disused set of his rather worn sensibilities.

Once, after a silence, she said, wistfully:

"'Utterly relieved and refreshed'—where have I seen that?"

"Emerson, I think."

"Oh, yes! 'Spiritual Laws'!"

"No, it isn't. I'm of the cult. It's in his essay on 'Love.'"

"His captions count for so little, don't they?" she said, hastily.

"Do you think so?" he queried, smiling down at her averted face.

As he parted from her on the wharf, a sudden grimness in his manner made the pretty blossoming in her face shrivel, mimosa-like, before his keen eyes.

"There must be no more of this," he muttered, as he sprang into

the ship's whale-boat and took the ropes.

But there was more—much more—and the days sped by, uncounted. Claire had a comic realization that she was now the real chaperon, with all the anxieties of the office; but, as she watched, the fierce look died out of her clear young eyes, and a something clutched her at the throat now and then.

Then, one morning, the telegram came from the Department ordering the ship to join the European squadron at Smyrna. In forty-eight hours she swung ready for sea. At such junctures the executive officer is fortunate who gets an hour alone, as Rock-hill said to himself as he stepped into the after-dinner boat, unconscious of any intention save that of many hasty farewells at the hotel. After twenty minutes of absent-minded badinage around the hop-room—where he saw Claire absorbed and happy in affairs presumably connected with Lieutenant Bulger's white, set face, and the "little" doctor's radiant, rosy one—he found himself rushing with roving eyes in and out of crowded rooms and along corridors and verandas in search of one face.

Once having grasped that fact, with his usual directness he went straight to the desk and sent his card up to Miss Ruth Truett. When the message came, asking him to go up to her reception-room, he laughed aloud, to his own astonishment and that of the colored bearer of the tidings. Then he went over to the flower-stand, and bought all the white flowers there were.

"They must be pure white," he said, so gravely that the woman at once scented further orders in the same line. Carrying them with all that open struggle between a man's disrelish for the obvious, and still greater disrelish for not having his own sovereign way, he knocked at her door.

"Well, it's good-bye to-night, Miss Truett. I suppose you've heard, of course. I've not had a moment till now. We sail at midnight to-night, as there's a moon. I'm under a flag of

truce, you see, so you're in honor bound to be good to me."

The color flew to her face, pale and stern when he entered, as she took the flowers from him with only a murmur of thanks. She flitted nervously about, getting together a rather meager array of vases, and he watched her in disappointed silence as she devoted her entire attention to the arrangement of the flowers. She inhaled each one, petting it with her delicate fingers, sometimes holding one up for his admiration, till he wished them back on the stand where his infelicitous impulse had found them. She avoided his eyes with a coquetry of which he had hitherto deemed her absolutely incapable, and of which she was in truth unconscious.

Finally, he jerked out, irritably:

"Good heavens, Miss Truett, those confounded things are not going away—and I am."

Then she turned and looked at him fully for the first time, dropping all her flowers, and cried:

"Oh, I am so purblind, so—everything! But, you see, people don't give me flowers very often, and I was so pleased. In all your life, Mr. Rock-hill, did you ever see such a stupid woman as I am?"

"I certainly never did!" he agreed; and the laugh which followed somewhat broke the restraint.

"A sailor has his little fads, and one of them is that he likes to fool himself into thinking some woman is sorry he's going, the night before he sails. Nonsensical vanity, of course, but perhaps the memory of it keeps him sane."

"You think?—you don't think?—Why, the flowers were just you!" she burst out, recklessly. Too late she saw the drift, and sprang to her feet excitedly. Following blind instinct, she fled to her writing-table, piled with long-neglected papers. Then she cried out:

"Oh, I cannot go on! I don't know your world. I'm all in the dark and alone. I belong here among my books and papers—go away out of my life, and leave me with them!"

She threw out her hand and struck the table with a sudden passion. Finally she fell into the chair and buried her face. Then the executive officer of the *Texas* knew exactly what had been the matter with him for the last five weeks.

He went to her, tried to speak, cleared his voice and at last said, with a gentleness this woman had yet to learn stands in men for strong passion controlled:

"No man who ever lived, or ever will, can be worthy of such a woman as you; but we go on hoping for heaven, just the same, knowing we don't deserve it—the worst of us and the best. I'm praying now for mine, and truly, truly, dear, I'm not the worst, the very worst."

"Oh, hush, hush! Do not say one word more to me. Just go, please," she moaned; "I am unspeakably humiliated!"

"I do not wish to go," he said, doggedly.

"It is not your fault—I comprehend that perfectly—that I—that I did not understand the manner of man you are," she went on, in a choked voice. "I was told yesterday by—by some one—when we heard nothing from you since the ship's orders came—told the truth: that men do not take—take women seriously, that they come and go in your lives; that women must be proud—always proud; that it's a sort of game. I should not have seen you to-night—oh, I should not have seen you! I do not know how to play the game."

"I have something to say to you, Miss Truett. Will you listen to me?"

With a violence that thrilled him, she cried: "Unless what you say stands for the simple truth as your mother taught you it at her knee—go!"

"It stands for the simple truth my mother taught me," he repeated, gravely.

She gave the prolonged, tremulous, indrawn sigh that a child does when the tide of grief begins running out.

He had all he could do to keep from shouting, for was not the door of his heaven lamenting on its golden hinges?

"Dear little girl!—for so you seem to me—I doubt if there's a year's difference between your heart and Gladys's. You'll come to us—to Gladys and to me? We need you so. Please answer me—you'll come?"

There was no reply.

"Heavens, child! do you think a man asks a woman to be his wife to please *her*? You don't know us! Listen: I love you, I have from the very first hour. Since Gladys's mother died when she was a wee baby, I have not taken women seriously—no, you are right. Nor is my pleading any other than the old cry of all men to all women since the beginning: 'I am not worthy of your love, but—love me!' I want you, only you, with your man's brain, your child's soul. And such is the brazen effrontery induced by a military life that I warn you now, whether you wish it or not, I'm going to marry you."

Was it a low laugh or a sob that he heard? Leaning over her, he tenderly laid his hand upon her bowed head, drawing in his breath sharply as the thrill of it struck him. And then came her answer; she unclenched her right hand, a finger at a time, slowly lifted it to her head and laid it gently upon his hand, pressing it down into her soft hair. And when he raised her face it was resplendent with emotion; the woman's nature long in suspension was at last precipitated.

"Now, dear, if you'll treat me no better than you did that beast of an old pond-lily over there, of which I was so jealous a moment ago, I'll try and be satisfied. No, that wasn't it at all! What a poor memory for so noted a scientist! Come, look up; I'll show you."

An hour later, Claire dashed into the room, followed by her father; but after one glance she turned and laid loving hands upon him, pushed him out into the hall and kissed very ten-

derly his bewildered face, whispering something that sent him away on tip-toe. Then she reëntered the room, closed the door gently and locked it.

Aunt Ruth was sitting alone with her lap full of flowers, her cheeks ablaze, her head bowed low, the hair loosened and rippling about her ears.

The girl knelt swiftly beside her, and threw her arms around her.

"Oh, I see it all, precious aunty, and I'm so glad, so glad!"

"Claire, I do feel so happy and so—so utterly foolish, somehow. Do you think it will ever wear off?" And her niece laughed till she cried.

"I have a confession to make, Clärchen, and I must make it to-night. Keep your arm close, close about me, or I cannot tell you. I've always hated science—always; in my heart, I mean! There is just some specialized faculty in my head for higher mathematics, which seems to bear not the faintest relationship to the rest of me. I drifted into the secretaryship when it became necessary after father's death, and my whole life has paid the penalty of that sudden inspiration that came to me that night I was making a calculation in rotative velocity—I saw a short cut—that was my crime. Well, from that hour, years ago, I have lived up—or down—to that wretched little moment of 'pure intuition,' as some one wisely calls pure mathematics. Wherever I go I'm forced to meet abstracted creatures who assume that I want to talk axial rotation! I go to a reception, and there are all sorts of other fascinating people there, but I never meet them; they avoid me as if I were a sort of mental monstrosity. I go to a dinner, and I have molting old birds, supposedly of my feather, on either side of me, if not also vis-à-vis. You can't think what I've been through! And all those years I wanted to dance, and be taken in to supper and—why, Claire, they never used to think I wanted to taste, talk, hear, feel, see anything but—stars! Half the time it's the world's obtuse, uninspired kindness that kills. It spoiled Europe for me. I took my vacation over there

four years ago, longing for pictures, for music, for shops, for driving about to see just the people, and—Claire, I was simply dying to sit in a rathskeller and drink out of a stein—are you, too, shocked, dear? Well, I began all wrong. I took a letter to a tutor at Brasenose College, I presented it, unfortunately—somehow it had a *dégagé*, unfettered sound to it, and I thought I was safe. Well, Brasenose spoiled Oxford for me, utterly. There I was again—the same shop talk—in a different accent—the same vague, dreamy, unhumorous men who didn't care how they were dressed, and less how I was. From there they passed me on to *une chaire d'astronomie* in Paris, and I went to—lectures. It was the same thing in Geneva and in Rome. You see, I don't know how to hurt people's feelings in a well-bred way—it's an art. Very learned men lent themselves good-naturedly, and very absent-mindedly, for the moment to a courteous patronage of a duodecimo American Sonya Kovalevsky—no less than three of them called me that! They thought they were pleasing me, those very gracious old men, and all the while my heart was crying out to be allowed to live; longing, longing just to have some one look me in the eyes—as I've seen other men look into other women's eyes—and, looking, 'find grace in his sight.' And, Claire, *he* did just that—that very thing at the very first! And I knew in a flash—just that same old intuition—I knew it had come to me at last; and I lost all control for a moment right there at the ward-room table on the *Texas*. You must have noticed it—he did! The doctor—the senior surgeon, don't you say?—tried to put me again under the same old receiver—didn't you hear? But I have come out of my prison into the world of love to-night! *He* battered down the walls in a strange, rough way, but when he found me within—cowering, frightened—he was so gentle, so tender! It is all more beautiful than I ever dreamed, and I am so terribly, terribly happy!"

The long, deep moan of a man-of-

war whistle came from the harbor, and Claire sprang instantly to her feet and flew to the open window.

"It's the *Texas*! She's heading about slowly. Come, Aunt Ruth. Watch the bow a minute, and the shore beyond, and you'll see."

Ruth Truett stood silent, looking

with dilated eyes, and, after one long sobbing inhalation, she whispered:

"So *this* is what it is to be a woman! To begin really to live! There's always a ship to be watched or waited for, going or coming, to the end. Ah, Claire, put your arms about me. I'm not very brave, my child."



BEAUTY AND LOVE

BEAUTY is the child of Love—
What he looks upon is fair,
Though it be an empty glove
Or a lock of faded hair.

Where he lights, the sunshine plays;
Round about him flowers bloom;
Spring, for him, lengthens her days,
Scattering all her rich perfume.

Work, if sweetened by his smile,
Is as light as heart of boy
When he, roving mile on mile,
Takes the world but for his toy.

Love may do whate'er he will,
Play his tricks, or sullen grow,
Beauty is his shadow still,
Following him where he doth go.

Let the fickle god depart—
All that's fair in darkness dies,
For of all he is a part,
And alone all beautifies.

RT. REV. JOHN LANCASTER SPALDING.
(*Bishop of Peoria.*)



HOW HE KNEW

MR. MILLIONS—The music at the opera was very poor indeed.

MRS. MILLIONS—Why, John! You seemed to enjoy it immensely.

MR. MILLIONS—I did, my dear; that's how I know it was poor music.

“MEN CALL IT CONSCIENCE”

By Mrs. Henry Dudeney

MARY PESKETT, who gathered simples, was walking through the woods. For her child-like yet cunning craft, she needed woods—little dark copses of oak and beech; subtle plants, for healing, grew hidden there.

It happened to be the first of January. The New Year came, beautiful and irresistible, across the brightening sky. Here, in the wood, although the north wind chanted in the upper branches, there were shelter and pretty promise beneath.

Mary knew the woods, and was peaceful in them. Woods laid large hands along her brow—that was puckered with the struggle to live. She knew the woods; she loved them. She missed nothing of their beauty—fairy wild-carrot leaves, branching in a tracery along the sloping banks; dead nettles flowered all up with ivory buds; the curled and brilliant leaves of lords and ladies springing from their Winter prison.

She had her basket and trowel. Now and again she darted forth, bent down, and dug up a treasured root. She was the village doctor and a wise woman.

To look upon!—a pretty, withered old creature. Yet not so old, after all—not old at all; only the village women appear to jump straight from fresh girlhood to a haggard and toothless state. Her cheeks were rosy streaked and wrinkly. She looked like a keeping apple; one of those jovial orchard things that lie on yellow straw all the Winter through—lie there and laugh at frost.

She put up her hand, and smoothed

afresh her decorous hair. Gray hair! And yet she was not so old—only hollowed and pointed by the struggle to live—just for bread and shelter; enough to keep her on the warm earth. She had such a dread of going under the earth and so abiding—until that rousing sound for which the patient dead wait.

She stooped to dig an early root of spear-mint for the doctoring of Betsy Morris who had lost her memory—and shuddered as she dragged the tenacious root to light and shook the mold from it. She could not endure the prospect of making this damp, brown ground her home.

“Though theer’s the Resurrection mornin’ fer sure,” she said, thoughtfully, sniffing at the mint before she packed it choicely in the basket.

Her trade, secret and lonely, lent itself to solitary speaking, earnest questioning and patient answering—from the same mouth. Sometimes she fancied that there were two Mary Pesketts gathering simples in the wood—one to query and the other to satisfy.

“But the Resurrection mornin’ ’ll be a long time comin’. An’ I’m fond o’ my flesh. I mind when this yere old skinny arm wur white an’ firm.”

She ruckled up her stuff sleeve, and smiled.

“When I gits the glorified body they tells on in the prayer book, likely I’ll be pretty Mary Peskett agen.”

“You be pretty Mary Peskett still, though not so young as might be,” growled a deep voice.

She jumped, and dropped the basket. Her mother had been a simple gatherer

before her, and she had grown up to tales of secrets that the woods held, of monsters lurking and eyes ceaselessly watching, of awesome things that might befall a body in this fast place.

"It's on'y you, Elias Angel!" Both her lean hands were tight against her shawl. "You gied me a fair fright. My heart's none so strong."

"Females warn't meant ter hev the care o' hearts," he said, laughing in a rather forced way, and making a gawkish, sidelong movement toward her.

"I've had the offer o' yourn fer twenty year," she retorted, softly, and looking down.

"It's yourn still, ef you cares to take it."

The blacksmith looked on this little red-cheeked woman, prematurely old, with a queer glance—half dove, half vulture.

She dropped back—as far from his ardor as the stile would allow. It was a gray stile, with a wide and polished upper bar. Lovers sat regularly on it all the long Summer evenings.

"I couldn't hev no dealin's—o' love—wi' one what's sold his soul ter the devil," she said, trembling.

Elias Angel was a big man. He was strong and dark—with his powerful trade. But he quailed.

"Theer's no dealin's atween the devil an' me," he said, stoutly, after a pause.

"But you've brought a many ter ruin. Theer wur Marster Jaggs, as farmed Boxalland. It fair broke his heart acause he couldn't pay up the interest."

"Ef folks will borryer money you can't blame him as lends."

"He died wi' a curse fer you, hangin' on the lip, Elias. I smoothed his piller ter the larst. I laid 'un out."

"You lays ivery one out when the time comes." The blacksmith looked with aversion at her withered hands.

"You're the ruin o' farmin' folk," she proceeded, eloquently—having found her text. "Think on the Widder Daborn. She died in the 'sylum, though I dosed her free wi' moonwort, which be a fine thing fer lunyticks."

"Mary," said the big man, humbly, "I seed you pass my door an hour or more back. I wur bound ter foller. The fire in my bosom burned hotter than thet from the forge. Ain't theer a plant in your basket as 'll heal a lover's quarrel?"

"We was niver lovers. God forbid! Theer's a summat in me—cold and strict"—she pressed her hand tellingly at her side—"what tells agen matterimony."

"Wi' all them roots an' all your skill," he persisted, "theer must sure be a charm ter make folks cheerful an' soft."

"I've knowed the corncockle ter smooth a quarrel," she admitted, thoughtfully, "an' basil makes you fine an' cheerful, so it do. But theer niver wun't be no peace atween us two, Elias. Why," her small body lifted itself to sudden drama, "you got a hold on me, too. Like as not you'll sell my bed—pore mother's own goose feathers—same as you did the Widder Daborn's."

"Maybe," he admitted, with a kindling eye. "Love's near hate. I'll own thet. It's a little step atween the two."

"You could sell away the cottage I wur borned in," she went on, tears struggling in her voice—making it wildly real, making it drop, and then rise into silly top notes. "Feyther and mother built it when they was coortin'. They begged a bit o' ground from the lord o' the manor—you could do it in them days. An' they built it o' mud and beams, jest sticks an' dirt, loike the little matin' birds builds nests."

"Ef you'd marry me, Mary Peskett, you should set idle in the parlor all the long days."

"I could niver bide in your parlor wi' thet picter over the hearth, Elias."

His face grew violent.

"I'm bound ter hev it, I tells you," he returned, sullenly. "It keeps off them what's worse. My—my head," he suddenly glared forth, and she felt afraid of him. "I've a shootin' pain at times, an' I feels all dizznified."

"Poppies is good for the headache," she returned, professionally, viewing

him with her gentle blue eyes, "acause their seed-pods is shaped like a head. Thet stands ter reason."

"Mary, I got a mortgage on yer cottage. But ef sur be we was married, I'd burn the deed on our wedded hearth."

"I ain't fer marriage." She pursed together her sad, mean lips. "Some turns agen it. Thet's natural—wi' them what knows the feelin'. I went ter a wise 'ooman when I wur a gell, an' she looks up quick from the cards she wur sortin'. 'Theer ain't no sweet-heart fer you, my wench, dark or fair,' she ses. An'—an' then, Elias, folks do say as the devil's got a muggeridge on your smithy. He's bin seed theer. Marster Jaggs see 'un the larst time he set in your parlor. But he niver come beyant the door, the Evil One didn't. An' he shrunk up inter a little pulin' devil as you could ha' scrunched in your palm, when he seed the picter above the hearth."

"Old Jaggs wur a liar, Mary Peskett."

Again she was dismayed by this blacksmith's familiar, yet dreadful, face, and by the glances he shot about the wood. She caught up her basket.

"Well, I must be gooin' on ter the village, Elias. Theer's Susan Wells sick o' the jarnders, an' dendelion's the cure fer it acause it's yaller. Yarbs an' sickness goos together, as you m' say."

She began to tick the village invaders off on her fingers.

"Theer's Susan wi' jarnders, an' Betsy Morris not by no means the 'ooman she wur, an' all Mrs. Nix's little 'uns down wi' the measles. Other folks' pains is my gains."

"Come an' live along o' me, Mary, an' take your ease."

He looked yearningly at her quickly mumbling mouth. The loss of her front teeth gave her a plaintive lisp which made him sorry for her.

"I'm all fer the single state," she said, ponderingly. "An', 'sides which, you've wronged the widdered an' fatherless. This yer money-lendin' I don't hold wi'."

"Money's a fine thing," he told her, stretching his mouth in a miser's grin.

"I'm allus in want on it," she admitted, pathetically. "I can't barely keep body an' soul together. Theer's nowt in my bit o' garden ground but taters. Most years I sets runner-beans, but I've kind o' lost heart fer fancy feedin'. Yet I ain't no friend ter taters."

"I could sell you up, stick an' stone, Mary Peskett."

"Thet's a true word," she admitted, holding the corner of her print apron to dab at her downcast eye.

"I could send you ter the poor-house."

"It's a hard place ter die in, Elias Angel. But I wouldn't niver lay me in pauper ground," her head lifted. "Theer's a Peskett grave an' a Peskett tombstone in the churchyard. It's near the wall. When I wur little an' feyther died, I useter fancy he'd cotch the tune o' 'All ye the Works' on Sunday mornin's. Thet wur his favorite; nowt wur forgot in the praisin'."

"I wun't talk on church." He looked away through the woods, and she wondered what he saw.

"You dursn't. You niver steps beyant the porch. The Evil One as owns you weights your pore foot, Elias."

"Ef you ses another word about me an' him, I'll kill you as you stands."

The blacksmith lifted his great fist. Mary was afraid of him. She had never noticed before what a big man he was. How terrible a big man could be!

"Love's purt' nigh hate," he continued. "I've bin your patient love fer twenty year. An' you goos an' throws the devil in my face."

She was attracted by his violence; cherishing and dreading it in the same quick heart-beat.

"No other chap niver gied me so much as a soft look," she admitted, stepping closer. "We're full old fer coortin', Elias; well on fer forty. We'll be a laughin'-stock wi' all these young gells an' fellers, but—"

"You're a-gooin' ter take me, Mary?"

His hot, odd passion for her flooded his face.

"It's—it's suddint. An'—an' I'm fixed in my ways."

"Twenty year I've bin a-waitin'."

"Ef you'll give up evil doin'; an' ef you'll hand back ter pore folkse the papers you holds; an'—an', Elias, ef you'll goo regular ter church an' hev the Sacrament at Easter," she stipulated, with a lingering, distasteful sigh—for wedlock.

He had gone chalky, shockingly white.

"I'll hold ivery paper," he said, savagely. "Them as wants 'em can come an' lift the coffin-lid when I lays dead. An' they can draw 'em out o' my stiff hand—ef they dares."

"You—you talks very wild, Elias."

Her timid words were his tonic. He relaxed. He looked ashamed, afraid, browbeaten. He drew his breath so quickly, his black eyes shot such an agonized and beseeching flash that she—village doctor, village nurse, the last to touch the dead gently—became alarmed. Instinctively, she looked down at her basket. But there was nothing ready. These roots and sprigs were only the potentialities of healing.

She marked the melancholy heave of the blacksmith's chest. She understood nothing at all. They passed in dramatic array—all the emotions that chase through the blood of a man long rejected: a man cheated of his true mating. Human passion had never touched her and never could. She was one of those celibate souls that are scattered white through all ranks of women. Her true happiness would have been to wash tremblingly around God's board. A crust, a cell, much silence—all the placid ecstasy which the Faith affords.

Elias looked at her—with eloquent hopelessness. Then he spoke—with a startling difference.

"Theer's two pound interest from you ter me payable on Lady Day."

He spoke calmly; the most dreadful calmness—to her, it was the cruel deliveration of the passing bell.

"A hundred pound I lent your

feyther. The house ain't worth pullin' down, but——"

"I wur borned in it. I did look ter die in it," she put in, valiantly.

"But theer's nigh on an acre o' ground, all frontage ter the road."

"You'd niver sell me up an' goo buildin' in my garden, all old orchard trees, Elias."

"Love's close bedfeller wi' hate, Mary Peskett."

"I takes no 'count o' your loves an' your hates," she wailed, looking on him in perplexity; "but wheer the two pund's a-comin' from, God in His heaven on'y knows—unless sur be theer's a good bit o' sickness in the village. An' it don't sim right ter count on groanin' an' death-beds, do it now?"

She was frankly crying. He could see her poor, thin shoulders, the flesh he loved, rising and falling beneath her Paisley shawl. Tears from a cherished woman take two ways with a man. Elias chose the violent road.

"Two pound on Lady Day," he repeated, "or I sells you up, Mary Peskett. An' her as might ha' bin a prosperous man's wife, may die in the workus fer all I cares."

With one stride he was over the stile. Along the lane he went. Mary, dropping her apron from her eyes, saw his black head, his black and bushy beard, through the exquisite thinness of the unclothed trees.

II

It was Lady Day. Mary Peskett sat in the blacksmith's parlor. She awaited him. This was to be a crucial meeting. She spread wide her toil-worn hands, and looked on the absolute emptiness of her palms. Through the wall came the manly sounds of the smithy.

The blacksmith's was the usual ugly country parlor. Above the hearth was that picture which gave a theme to the room. It was a cheap German print of the crucifixion, and the picture that Mary had vowed she could never live with. Crude fancy had portrayed a

fleshly Christ. This subject, which in true hands has commanded the tears of the world for nearly two thousand years, was debased to grotesqueness. Mary tried not to look. But the brilliant blue garments worn by the women at the foot of the cross, the drops of crimson blood—these colored the walls.

Elias came in just as he was—all grimed from the forge. The simple woman noticed, with her eye for sickness, the deadness of his lips and the hollows, like finger marks, at his temples.

"Elias," she said, quiveringly—rising, half curtsying even, she was so in his power—"I ain't brung the two pund. I—I couldn't save he by noways, my dear."

Very rarely had she called him by any tender name.

He sat down at the bureau. This ancient piece of furniture was a tribunal. It cried out with village history. Master Jaggs had wept beside it—easy tears of extreme age. The Widow Daborn had sat sideways on the chair near, trembling for her cherished bed of feathers. The blacksmith was a hard man, and those who borrowed of him had sold their birthright.

He was turning over his papers, taking them from the little pigeon-holes inside the bureau. With her maternal interest in him—a lover of twenty years—Mary noticed how his flat, shining face was on the work all the time and how, just as if a wire tweaked his muscles, he kept turning to look at that profane picture above the hearth.

"What time I wur nursin' I saved ivery penny I could, Elias. But theer ain't bin much sickness, nor yet many little babbies. I knowed theer wouldn't be no babbies, acause theer was hardly any catkins on the hazel bushes larst year."

Elias picked out his paper, and stuffed the others back. He patted it flat with his blackened hand—the mortgage deed on her cottage.

"Two pund down be due, Mary Peskett."

"I knows it be. An' I ain't saved more'n seven shillun."

"You paid nowt at Michaelmas, an' I let you off then. 'Tain't my rule ter give time."

"Time wun't be my healin'," she said, dolefully. "Ef I wur ter search the wide world from here ter Dunchester an' beyant, I'd niver see the chance o' two pund or one."

"I can take the roof from over your head."

"I knows it. Full well, I knows it."

She began to weep. The veins in his neck turned purple.

"It's clean tore the innards out o' me ter find this 'ere money twice a year. I've sold a'most ivery stick o' furniture—the oak chests an' the china figgers an' mother's little silver spoons thet she kep' wropped away in wash-leather, an' on'y brung out fer funerals an' christenin's. I offen feels as mother don't forgive me fer partin' wi' the spoons. Fer the dear Lord's sake, don't 'ee turn me out o' the little house, Elias. I'm jest like a cat fer lovin' places."

"Thet garden o' yourn—it'll cut up inter a nice row o' bay-fronted villas," he said, staring at her.

She arose, her face streaming.

"Then the ghosts o' feyther an' mother'll walk clean through the walls," she said, solemnly, and lifting her hand in valediction.

"You don't believe in sech?" asked the blacksmith, quickly.

Mary laughed—in the free, wild way of an outdoor creature.

"I marks 'un in the wood—frequent. But I bain't afeard o' sperrits, good or bad."

"An' the devil? Him what goes about like a roarin' lion?"

Elias, as he spoke, peered into the corners of the room, and mopped his face with his spotted handkerchief.

"Marster Jaggs see 'un at this very door." Mary pointed, eloquently. Her eye lighted. She was kin with the mysterious; woods had taught her this.

"But he don't niver come acrost the threshold," Elias told her, quickly.

"This parlor's my safe spot."

He turned round full to the picture, and flung up his haggard face.

"I sleeps here," he confessed. "I lays on the sofa, nights."

"Elias! You ain't yourself! Theer's fever in your eye. Now, cucumber pared thin be good fer thet, or a bag o' borage-blooms hung about the neck wares off fits."

"I'm well enough," he maintained, "so long as I keeps close by the picter. I dursn't bide at the forge long. He comes behind. He'll shove me inter the fire one o' these fine days."

"Elias! I wun't believe as him what coorted me has sold his soul."

She wiped her eyes, and tottered forward to comfort him.

He jumped back.

"You're arter the paper!" He whirled his hand behind him.

"No," she said, calmly, and falling away, "I truly warn't."

She realized, all at once, as baited things do, when worn enough, that the final moment is not so bad as the long dread of it. Let him take her cottage. She could sleep in the woods.

She turned away, instinct with dignity. She looked a queen, the bent and shabby little creature, as she opened the door and walked forth into the garden, her head held high in the spicy Spring air.

Elias followed, the mortgage deed still in his hand. The borders were filled with flowers—yellow and white, bowing reverently on the long stalk. This was Lady Day. They were festive—honoring the Mother of God.

The door of the smithy stood open. Mary stepped in, her wild lover close at her heels. She turned and faced him.

"The sun outside makes your eyes sore," she said, quietly, "so I'm come in here for a larst word. You—you started coortin' me in here, Elias. I mind the day; chestnuts was in bloom, an' mother sends me down ter the forge wi' an old kettle ter be soddered, an' you——"

"I wur a young chap, then," he told her, vacantly. "When a man's growed he thinks on solemn things; on what comes arter this life."

She saw him shiver; and she told, by his gray, parched look, that she had lost him. He would never be a lover any more. She suffered a wrench. He had been a possession for twenty years. And now his spring of love lay broken.

He was gone. The change had come to him, which sometimes comes to middle-aged men with such startling suddenness. He was struck all along the side—of love.

Closed was the door of her deliverance. She had wrestled with herself coming along the road; she had half persuaded herself to marry him. It would be a trial—one of those nervous jerks that roughen life. She so cherished her clear, peaceful chastity. But she fancied, on careful weighing, that she loved the cottage more.

Elias spoke the very thought that was sluggishly forming in her distracted brain.

"How can a man think on a woman when he's fair eat up wi' dread o' the devil, Mary Peskett? Tell me thet."

She gazed across the smithy in terror; feeling the shocking gulf between them. Here, in touching distance, was one foredoomed to eternal flames. And he once had loved her!

She believed in a personal devil—that conviction so essential to the pious life. It wrung her to think that Elias—a lover, a husband even, had she so chosen—was quivering in the grip of the Terrible One.

"He wun't let me bide," confided the blacksmith, piteously. His eyes looked from a long way off, from such a forlorn distance. Truly Elias, the lover, had absolutely departed!

"He's like a cursed dog fer follerin' an' watchin'. He—he's grinnin' round the door now. Keep atween us, Mary Peskett!"

She glanced through the door. It merely made a frame for the devoutly smiling morning. Elias looked, too—and saw more than the morning. He screamed. He started to run.

"Let me goo back ter the picter. One sight o' the cross withers him."

"Elias! Elias Angel! Keep a good

heart, my dear. See! I made a cross to skeer 'un."

She seized two bits of rough iron that lay on the bench, crossed them, and piously held them high. Her face was rapt as, with throat and arms stretched upward, the bonnet slipped from her gray head, she raised the blessed emblem.

"In the name of Christ!" she said, in a soft, new voice.

This was a moment! Elias threatened, and she designed by God to snatch him from perdition. Likely this was why she had been born into the world. Very often she had racked her head for a reason.

"Look on it!" she cried, ecstatically. "The cross, Elias!"

But he had stumbled and heavily fallen, his head on the anvil. The last she saw of him was his tortured face and the sharp, black peak of his beard as he dropped.

How instantly, at the blacksmith's cry, the smithy filled with people! Mary remained—dazed. At her feet were the pieces of iron—no longer symbolic.

They all came tumbling and shouting in—Jane Wells, who cooked and cleaned for him; the apprentice; old Master Herbert Rapley, who had been Spring digging the vegetable patch; the doctor, who happened to be passing on his morning round.

She let them carry him away—she, who had the best, the only, right to touch him. They carried him away. She was neighborly with Death—and here greeted him. Elias was dead. As they carried away the bulky, nerveless body, suddenly grown strangely long, she wondered vaguely what had become of the best part of Elias Angel—the part which had been her true love.

As she stood, staring and cold, conscious most surely of a second presence, she saw on the floor the mortgage deed, just as Elias had dropped it. She picked it up, hating the very crisp touch, execrating the lettering which she could not read. She picked it up, she threw it on the embers and began to blow the fire.

The smithy was ruddy. The flames roared. The sweat ran down her face. Her mild blue eyes started with terror. She was afraid of fire. She would always be afraid for the rest of her life. But the paper! It was gone. To her ignorance, this paper represented everything. It was sole witness. No one could touch her cottage now.

It was gone. She knew perfectly well who had prompted her deed. She was not alone in the smithy. Shivering from head to foot, she approached the door and the innocent world. On the threshold, she looked back and tremblingly spoke—tears in her voice, and thick terror.

"You've no call ter bide about here," she said, stoutly, making a cross with her hands across her lean breast. "Elias be fetched away, pore chap!"

She sat in her cottage a week later, No one could turn her out of this sweet home place. She was sleek with absolute security. She might hoard her celibate state. The idea of mating had always done violence to her instincts.

"The on'y husband as iver I wanted wur the little house an' the bit o' land," she murmured, cherishing the white-washed walls.

She sat with her hands folded. How blessed was absolute idleness! On the fire there brewed a great pot of herbs. The steam came in a thin line through the tightly shut lid, and the room was pensively filled with Oriental fragrances.

She was free. She was at peace—almost. Yet the memory of the burned paper touched that delicate part of her which men call conscience. Now and again she shook her head—for her sins. More than once she shuddered—for her soul. The little spark of penitence was growing. It lighted a destroying fire in her bosom. A hard tear splashed on her shining knuckles. She looked furtively at the open door. Elias had always distrusted an open door—for the Thing or the dread Person who might peep round. She rapidly approached that insistent mood when sinners seek shriving.

There were feet on the cobbled path outside. She stumbled up. Through her lips there came a thin cry. Who stood without?

But the new-comer was only the doctor—rosy and clean-shaved, blown fresh with the robust March morning. These two knew each other very well.

"I can't goo a-nursin', Dr. Ambrose," she said, shaking and curtseying. "I ain't fit ter bide near the sick an' dyin'."

"You may retire from nursing, Mary Peskett. You are a woman of means. Elias Angel was buried on Friday and——"

"A Friday—sure!" she murmured, touching the wispy black neckerchief at her chin—all the mourning she had been able to find by rummaging in ancient family boxes.

"And he left a will, giving you every penny he had in the world."

Her jaw dropped, and her hands hung.

The doctor snuffed up the fragrance from the bubbling pot, and indulgently smiled.

"You won't be spoiling my business for me now, Mary Peskett."

She looked round the room, loving every inch of it, and aching for the bare places.

"Do you think, sir," she stammered at last, "thet Mrs. Morris Nix over by Penny Pot 'ud suffer me ter buy back them silver teaspoons? You're very good friends wi' Mrs. Morris Nix. Pore mother wur main set on them spoons, an' I'd pay the weight in goold, cheerful I would, fer thet dear soul ter lay quiet in her grave. We did orter do all as we can fer the helpless dead."



THE MEN WHO LOSE

WHEN you've toasted all the captains who have sailed the Ship of Right,
And bowed before the laurel crown of them that won the fight,
Here then's another health I call—the vessel tempest-tossed—
Drink to the ships that went astray! Drink to the Men Who Lost!

Their name? Their name is legion—their names you never knew;
They would not rise again from shame to take the crown of you.
For what avails the homage of the teeming street and mart,
The statue in the market-place, when worms are at the heart?

A better song is in their ears than ever victor heard,
A higher praise is in their hearts than any gilded word;
They have learned the final lesson, though they learned it to their cost,
The men who lived and suffered, the men who loved and lost.

Through all the world they wander still, these outcasts at your gate;
They have done with all your customs, and they preach the word of hate;
Yet are we kin with you, and once at least our paths have crossed.
Then pledge us now—drink deep and long—stand up: The Men Who Lost!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



TO err is human; to forgive—diplomatic.

THE MACHINATIONS OF MARCIA

By May Isabel Fisk

THAT Marcia Egerton was an uncommonly clever girl no one could deny—indeed, no one cared to, save, of course, those rare women who are always prone to undervalue, and, whenever feasible, entirely discountenance the charm of another. That Marcia herself was quite as well aware of her own powers as those who admired and looked up to her, cannot be denied, either. She was self-sufficient, she was self-reliant, and the constant recognition of her acumen had imparted to her bearing a certain—well, scarcely arrogance, but something akin, which lent a rather added attraction to her natural stateliness.

That "Marcia's wonderful firmness of character" held an element of dogged obstinacy, or that her calm, blond beauty ever had an appearance of—say, stodginess, I would be the last to suggest.

But that is neither here nor there; those who knew were those over whom she held dominion, and to them she was a species of religion.

In the family, Marcia was paramount; her sway had never been questioned, her behests always obeyed, since, a toddling infant, she had pointed a pudgy finger at anything her fancy dictated, and lisped, "I want." She reigned by right of will alone, and no queen exacted more humble obedience.

The visiting list was under her rigid supervision, and those whom she black-listed were forever wiped from the social horizon of the Egerton family, whether any of the other members desired it or not. From the purchase of a rug to the scanning of a trite but

ever recurrent tragedy of the plumber's bill, Marcia was consulted, and her dictum permitted of no appeal.

Of course there was Harold, lately returned from a college career, and he had many ideas of independence, but there was something about the resourceful calm of Marcia that struck him as almost uncanny, and in the end he, too, yielded to the yoke.

It was the time of year when the question of the Summer flitting had to be discussed. At least, the other members of the family discussed it, and when the time was ripe, Marcia stepped in with her "superior judgment," and settled the matter in the manner she chose. I am speaking of years past. Now, Marcia observed:

"You need not engage a room for me, papa. I shall remain at home with you."

"Wha—what!" exclaimed the family in chorus.

"No," continued Marcia, calmly, "I shall remain at home with papa. Some one ought to look after him. It seems very selfish of us all to go off and leave him alone. I cannot but feel that I am best fitted to make the sacrifice. I do it gladly."

The head of the house for whom she expressed such solicitude regarded her with a baleful glare. It is possible he saw disappearing—well, the usual things with which the town-bound man is wont to spend his otherwise lonely evenings while mourning the absence of his family. The younger brothers and sisters looked on in silent awe at this exemplification of daughterly devotion; the mother wiped a tear from the corner of her eye, quite overcome.

But the college fledgling, Harold, whistled loud and long his incredulity.

"Don't do that again, Harold; it rasps my nerves and I must reserve all my strength to withstand the heat in town this Summer," observed the exponent of self-abnegation.

"But—but," spluttered Papa Eger-ton, "you'll do nothing of the kind. I won't have you round—I mean it will be much too warm for you—I can't permit——"

Marcia transfixed him with her large blue eyes.

"I shall remain, papa," she said, gently. And all knew it was useless to agitate the question further.

Now, Marcia had decided that she was "getting on;" indeed, she felt the time was not far removed when she should have attained the "thankful age"—a point wherein almost everything in the masculine line proves acceptable. True, she had many admirers—there, that expresses it, perfectly—"admirers"—who looked up to her and worshiped her from afar, but none dreamed of asking such a superior being to share his ordinary lot. Preposterous!

The last time she had moved, graceful and self-possessed, up the aisle to the accompaniment of "tum, de-de-de, tum, tum, de-de-de," she knew she would never again attend another to the threshold of matrimony. She had been maid of honor twice, and bridesmaid four times. On this occasion she had been the subject of many little quips and jokes, anent the possibility of her being the next, etc. To all of these witticisms Marcia responded with a faint smile, but inwardly she raged. Something must be done, and done without delay.

She had read somewhere of a young woman who had remained in the city, one Summer, while the rest of her friends had mourned at manless resorts. This brilliant girl had arranged the back-yard as a veritable garden, stocked the refrigerator with cold refreshments and then proceeded to dispense hospitality to the most eligible men in town. It did not take many

evenings of hammock swinging in the back-yard under the pale light of the stars, or trips to the ice-box in the still dimmer illumination of the butler's pantry, for this enterprising young person to nail the most desirable *parti* in town. Why should not she, Marcia——?

As the last flutter of a vanishing handkerchief was lost in the distance, Marcia gave a sigh of relief and prepared for business.

She worked desperately hard all day, but by nightfall everything was arranged to her satisfaction. She had entirely closed the front of the house. Beneath the chestnut-tree in the back-yard she had placed a rustic table and settee. To a pendulous limb she roped one end of a hammock; the other was fastened securely to a fence. Four palms in their brass standards were filched from the drawing-room and placed advantageously. A nearby florist was hurriedly pressed into service, and transformed the stiff square of sod into riotous masses of color. The whole effect was extremely attractive.

Paterfamilias viewed the transformation with a disapproving frown.

"Humph!" was all he remarked.

"Why, papa, I thought you would be so pleased. Don't you truly like it?"

"Do you expect me to sit out here nights with you?"

Marcia bent over, and plucking a velvet-petaled pansy, regarded it thoughtfully before transferring it to her father's coat.

"Papa, dear," she said, softly, "I don't expect nor want you to make any sacrifice for me; I am staying in town to make you happy. Go ahead, just as though I wasn't here, and I—well, I'll manage. We may as well understand each other at the start."

Pater pursed his lips as though to whistle, apparently thought better of it, and slowly winked one eye and then the other.

"Don't, papa; how inexpressibly vulgar!"

"My girl," said the father, "you ain't so stupid as you look."

Marcia winced under the doubtful compliment, but said nothing.

"Well, I'm off," said *pater*. He paused at the kitchen door and regarded his offspring with a newly acquired admiration. "Marcia, you're all right—you're a chip of the old block. Don't sit up for me." Again he winked slowly and solemnly, and disappeared in the house.

In the growing dusk, Marcia swung in the hammock and commenced to map out her plan of campaign. First, she would——

Clear and high above the muffled din of the streets rang the notes of a violin. Silhouetted against the light in the second-story window of the next house, stood a man, playing. Presently he paused, and laying aside his instrument, looked out. His falling glance rested upon Marcia. Marcia returned the regard, though she grew very red. After a moment the man bent his head toward her and began to play something weird and romantic, in a minor key, that thrilled her through and through, and Marcia knew he was playing to her. It was very interesting and delightfully improper; at last, affrighted, she fled into the kitchen.

The next morning, at an early hour, Marcia was in the yard watering the flowers. She was very attractive in her immaculate white shirt-waist and piqué skirt, to which a tiny apron added a touch of coquetry. Marcia had decided that the simplest of gowning would be most appropriate for the rôle of a stay-at-home.

A soft thud, and at her feet a rose fell, its stem piercing a white sheet of paper. Marcia looked up. At the window of the next house stood, smiling, her serenader of the night before. In the light of day she observed that he was well built and good-looking in a swarthy, foreign fashion. But what most attracted her was the gay red-and-blue uniform with its shining array of brass buttons. If Marcia could have owned to a weakness of any sort it was her predilection for gold lace and brass buttons.

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She hesitated, and then, flushing, picked up the note.

FAIR UNKNOWN:

Will you give me the pleasure of your acquaintance? May I call this evening at eight?

Respectfully,

ROMAGNO.

Marcia threw a nod and a smile, and then, overcome by her boldness, hastened into the house.

Now, Marcia was not unlike others of phlegmatic temperament and limited imagination—once turn on the faucet of fancy and the stream becomes a devastating flood, impossible to shut off.

By nightfall Marcia had made up her mind they would live in Rome during the Winter. All the girls would be green with envy when they received her letters dated "Rome, So-and-so;" "Palazzo, So-and-so." That her unknown adorer was a man of title was attested by his note—on it was emblazoned a crown just above the initials, R. H. G. B. She remembered that foreigners of title were always well supplied with names.

Shortly after dark she answered a knock at the back gate and there he stood, uniform and all.

Of course, it was a bit awkward at first, but Romagno—he taught her to say it before the evening was over—was so very easy and offhand in his manner—so delightfully foreign—that her embarrassment soon wore off. It was all fascinating beyond anything she had experienced before.

Although communicative on all other subjects, her guest grew reserved when the conversation took a personal turn. Marcia surmised something mysteriously romantic—he was traveling incognito; but the brass buttons with his initials, R. H. G. B.—it was an odd conceit; she liked it—so delightfully foreign—betrayed him. She would learn all later.

About ten o'clock Marcia remembered the ice-box. It proved all and more than the girl Marcia had read about, claimed for it.

When they again came out into the

yard, Marcia said he must not do it again even though he were delightfully foreign. However, she was delighted to see with what gusto he made away with the dainty edibles and cold drinks she had so carefully prepared. He ate rather hastily and in somewhat different fashion from men she had been associated with, but that, too, was delightfully foreign. He seemed thoroughly familiar with her own language, and spoke with scarcely a trace of accent.

At the end of a week, Romagno avowed his love for her and Marcia had confessed hers in return for him. Would she fly with him? Now, *wasn't* that delightfully foreign? Any American would have asked, stupidly, "Will you marry me?" Would she fly with him?—well, rather!

Said Romagno: "We had better clear out some evening when the family is away, or better still, on your night off."

"Night off!" repeated Marcia, puzzled.

"Yes," said Romagno, "or on your Sunday afternoon, if you would rather."

Marcia had started up, her eyes ablaze with fury.

"Who do you think I am?"

"Come, come," said Romagno, "don't get huffy. You were so perky and had so much style about you, I thought all along you were the waitress or up-stairs girl, but I soon found out myself you were the cook by all these good salads and things you make. But it doesn't make a bit of difference

to me—cook or no cook—I am just as fond of you any way you put it, and——"

"Stop, stop!" shrieked Marcia; "go this minute!"

"What a little cat you are! I didn't mean anything——"

But Marcia had dashed into the house and up-stairs to her room.

Next morning Marcia lay on the shrouded sofa in the dim drawing-room. Her head was splitting and her eyes were swollen with weeping—she still sobbed intermittently. She heard steps descending the stoop of the next house. She crept to the window and raising the shade cautiously, peeped out. Had the shock of the night before affected her brain? Surely—no, she saw a number of men all in uniforms precisely like Romagno's, even to the buttons, and—yes, even to the initials, R. H. G. B. They all carried odd-shaped bundles wrapped in dark material. As one man turned, he displayed on the object he was carrying, the inscription, "Romagno's Hungarian Gipsy Band."

That same afternoon as Mrs. Egerton emerged from the dining-room of the Pine-Top Hotel, she was handed the following telegram:

City hot. Father unbearable. Expect me on evening train.

MARCIA.

"Well," remarked Mrs. Egerton, complacently, "I knew Marcia and her father would never get along alone together without me!"



HEARTS

THEY played at hearts on the ocean strand,
 When the moon was shining bright;
 He thought that the queen was in his hand,
 She thought she played aright.
 But Summer has gone, and they both have strayed
 Away from the fickle wave.
 He says 'twas only the deuce she played,
 She says he played the knave!

C. S. FRIEDMAN.

PEDIGREES IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE

By Maurice Francis Egan

THERE seems to be growing in this country a belief that pedigrees have a value not suspected in the days of that aristocratic Virginian, George Washington, whose arms are responsible for the make-up of our flag—that flag which is supposed to represent only democratic tendencies. And so, I feel it my duty to make an inductive study of the pedigree—the pedigree in the United States—not with a view of settling anything—that would be unscientific—but merely to show how the matter of the pedigree stands in the eyes of the people who see even romance with one glowing and one practical eye. The King, in “Hamlet,” says something like this.

In the first place, a family with a pedigree has in itself a germ of reverence which goes on constantly developing as the pedigree develops. Reverence, we are informed, is completely lacking in American life. Given the germ of a pedigree in any enterprising American family, and the result will be as surprising as the appearance of a mushroom-bed in a cellar of the right temperature where the spawn of the mushroom has been properly cultured. To be concrete, let me say that, in Maryland, a little Calvert goes a great way—just as a little Lafayette in the way of beds goes in Virginia, or a little *Mayflower* in the way of spinning-wheels in New England. There is a petrified pie still preserved at Springfield which gives glory to an otherwise commonplace family driven from Boston because it could not afford to subscribe to the Symphony concerts; the pie—pumpkin, of course—is said to have been left over from one of Mr.

Ralph Waldo Emerson’s breakfasts. To return to my illustration: so great is the reverence developed by a little pedigree injected into a family, that a sixth cousin—he had emigrated to the Eastern Shore—of the first cousin of the first Maryland Calvert broke off all relations with his only brother because that brother would insist on retaining a complete set of Fanny Burney’s works in his library in Baltimore. There is a passage in the “Memoirs” of this vivacious lady—who, having married a D’Arblay, ought to have understood the irreverence of it as applied to a Calvert—in which she quotes the first Lord Baltimore as saying, “I have been upon a little excoriation to see a ship lanced, and there’s not a finer going vessel on the face of God’s yearth—you’ve no idiom how well she sailed.”

You can imagine the shock given to reverence by words like this, quoted by a woman who might, at least, have neutralized her effrontery by explaining the meaning of aphasia, which is an infirmity of only noble minds not brought up in the trammels of the dictionaries. It was sufficient; Eastern Shore will not speak to Baltimore until the accursed volumes are banished. If we lack reverence, let us cultivate more pedigrees. It is true that we are in a state of transition. Mistakes will occur, of course. “My husband,” a woman of wealth, legitimately acquired in Texas oil wells, said recently, “visited the herald’s office in London, and discovered that we are descended from a Knight of Malta!—it’s so romantic!—here are the arms!” “Beautiful!” said one more advanced—her money had been earned

forty years earlier in Pennsylvania oil wells—"beautiful! But where is the bar sinister?" "I don't know," answered the first woman of fortune, in an aggrieved tone, "everything ought to be there. I am sure George paid enough for it!" "I shouldn't mind, dear," the second lady of fortune said; "*anybody* can have a bar sinister!"

This was unkind; but it shows that much advancement has been made in heraldic matters among persons of fortune since the Civil War. The second woman still bears the crest of the Bayards, she being, she says, descended from a Huguenot family of Louisiana. She might have chosen a better place for Huguenots, and she has forgotten that the gallant chevalier—*sans peur*, but not altogether *sans reproche*—had, as the cynical De Bacourt says in "Memoirs of a Diplomat," "the good sense never to marry," and also that a crest is not quite proper, no matter how well engraved, to be borne by a married woman. Still, she has advanced. Her sons will have the wisdom to choose another ancestor. Froissart is full of ancestors not yet preempted, and, although the title of Vidame de Chartres appears in the very first page of the "Memoirs of the Duc de Saint Simon" no American family has yet claimed it. The business of registering pedigrees may yet become so great that the Government will have to establish a bureau, when its utility becomes as apparent as I hope in the course of this paper to indicate. There is one great difficulty in the way of registration, the necessity of frequent changes, as people feel that an increase of wealth entitles them to longer pedigrees; no doubt, however, the Treasury could find room for these increasing fees. There is no use in telling me that an undirected choice of ancestors sometimes leads to disasters; I know it, yet difficulties of this kind might be avoided by the appointment, for the present, of a board of directors—men of erudition, as well as good taste—under the superintendence of the officials of the Library of Congress. I emphasize good taste

as necessary because of the mistake made by Mr. —, whose name I cannot give because he is well known in Chicago. Early in life he had been foolish enough, during his first trip abroad, to choose an eminently respectable cardinal, mentioned in Bae-deker, as one of his ancestors, not knowing that sort of thing went out with the Renaissance and that Duke of Valentinois, a cardinal, to whom Mr. William Waldorf Astor drew our attention in a novel, but did not claim as an ancestor. Mr. Blank, of Chicago, confidently tried to run for an important elective office in the stockyards district. When his ancestry was announced by an A. P. A. paper he did not poll ten votes in that district. Not that the voters in the stockyards have a prejudice against cardinals.

You will admit that this shows the folly of the undirected American youth's choosing its own ancestors. It shows likewise that persons who guide the choice of pedigrees should have good taste; and, decidedly, in the present condition of things, when so many illustrious ancestors are wandering about unclaimed, bars sinister and unnecessary reflections on decent cardinals and Knights of Malta may easily be avoided.

A most flagrant case of needless aspersions cast on persons of extraordinary propriety—in the sense of virtue; it is difficult to find a sufficiently chaste phrase to express what I mean—is that which readers of fiction may recall. I think it occurs in a work by an unusually serious-minded person, Kate Douglas Wiggin. As I remember, her heroine, Penelope, being in Scotland, thinks it expedient to choose Scottish ancestors, and she mentions John Knox and Meg Merrilies. This is regrettable, coming as it does from a writer who seldom shows that light-mindedness which taints the works of so many modern factors of fiction. It is neither in good taste nor accurate. It is true that Meg Merrilies was not conventional, but Sir Walter Scott never said a word against

her character; and, as to John Knox, though personally I should like to believe that he was capable of anything, there is no record that he and Miss Margaret Merrilies ever met. It is a great pity that Penelope—though we know that American girls when abroad lose their natural seriousness—should not have reflected that it is no light matter to take away the reputation of a minister of the Gospel. After all, it is not the man who suffers so much from these insinuations, and Knox's descendants, if there are any resembling him unhappily alive, can take care of his reputation; but who is to defend, to exonerate, to clear the reputation of Margaret Merrilies? She may have had her faults; but the careless world ought not to be induced to believe that she ever loved John Knox! Kate Douglas Wiggin's Penelope is but a type of these Americans who, in choosing ancestors, think too little of the pain they give to the thoughtful. The careless woman who once cast scorn on the time-honored practice of spiritism—known long before the managers of the Eleusinian mysteries discovered the telephone—by forcing an amiable "medium" to produce the ghost of Robinson Crusoe, belonged to this destructive class.

I once knew an elderly gentlewoman—she was Irish by descent—who had condescended to marry a Frenchman of the family of Saint Pierre. Her example has always struck me as one of a highly convincing kind. Her own genealogical tree flourished more greenly every year. It came to include in time Brutus, King Arthur, Brian Boru and Lady Edward Fitzgerald. She, however, made the mistake of having it carefully written out and illuminated; consequently, when, at a small dinner given in Washington by one of the most distinguished of the cave dwellers, she was obliged to give precedence to a relative of the Medina-Coeli, it almost broke her heart; but, as the Medina-Coeli, as we all know, are descended from King David, and consequently claim to be cousins, several times removed, to the Blessed Virgin, her religious princi-

ples forced her to go as far back as she could. There had been moments in her life when she had thanked heaven that her late husband, M. de Saint Pierre, had been "no real kin" to her, as our colored brethren phrase it; but she suddenly remembered that her husband's favorite saint had been Petronille, the only granddaughter known to history of St. Peter's wife's mother. There is a chapel to St. Petronille, much venerated by the French ambassadors at Rome; there is no record of the marriage of this saint, and the scion of the Medina-Coeli remarked this, when the proud gentlewoman demanded precedence as the descendant of "*Saint Pierre, qui avait fondé l'église catholique, vous comprenez?*" But, as Madame de Saint Pierre pointed out, there was no record of the marriage of King David. There was much argument—in Washington, and, later, in Rome, in fashionable circles—until an obliging chamberlain of the cloak and spade, who was also Irish, gave the triumphant Madame de Saint Pierre a fine place in a tribune at Saint Peter's at a great function as one of the nieces of the Pope—which Pope was not named; but it settled the lady's claims. The only point remaining to be defined—it was undecided at her death—was whether she should take secular or ecclesiastical precedence. The latter would have forced her to enter last. All this proves that in the adopting of ancestors, the victory is never to the timid.

Great harm may be done by relying on guides to genealogies who have only a defective knowledge of the Latin grammar. There was that most delightful Milwaukee family, the Geigenwils. It would be very bad form to mention the name, if these afflicted folk, all girls, had not changed it through hasty marriages with men whose genealogies have been improved by their wives' sad experience. It was Emma, the eldest daughter—she had taken the classical medal in one of these delightful finishing schools where there are no examinations—who was responsible for a mistake which cast a

gloom on a name until that time glamourised with the festive associations that could only cluster around the best brand of beer ever made in Milwaukee. She is now in seclusion in the Austrian Tyrol, looking up a quartering or two for her husband. Emma—then a sweet, bright, innocent girl, untouched by sorrow—discovered one day that the Geigenwilds were entitled to the prefix “von.” “Von!” old Geigenwild said, heartlessly—he was then alive—“Von! Von tollar or von thousand tollar is more in my line; the tollar mark is good enough for Oonkle Fritz!” Emma found in the Milwaukee public library a delicious book of pedigrees. And, in parentheses, I would advise the scrupulous pedigree-hunter to avoid public libraries—old and remote tombstones are better. The book that Emma found contained the Bavarian pedigree of the von Geigenwild-Schönsteiners-Schoonermeers. It included Charlemagne—no pedigree in the United States is complete without Charlemagne—Frederick Barbarossa, William Tell, Christine of Sweden, Catherine Bora, and Luther, of course, and the general of the Hessians who came over to wipe out George Washington at a “levy” a head, in 1776 or thereabouts. This last was the most precious of all, for it would have given Emma Geigenwild admission to the Society of Colonial Patricians, which is almost as much honored in Milwaukee as the Deutscher Club. The happy Emma discovered, under the date of July 6, 1773, next to the loveliest set of quarterings, with a goat rampant over a stein, emblazoned with hop flowers, *or*, the record of a Frederick von Geigenwild-Schönsteiner-Schoonermeers, and, in brackets, *fuit*, with his age, sixteen. He fled—Emma translated “*fuit*” as “fled”—and, if he “fled,” why not to America? The grateful girl at once presented her family with an ancestor who had fled with the Hessians, returned to his native country, accepted his ancestral honors, and became the grandfather of that dear papa who jocularly called himself your “Oonkle Fritz.” Milwau-

kee accepted the Geigenwilds and their pedigree until a hateful Chicago reporter, envious of the glory of a too powerful rival city, found Emma’s lovely book in the public library, and announced that Frederick von Geigenwild-Schönsteiner-Schoonermeers had “died,” not “fled,” at the age of sixteen. The matter was hushed up; but the five (von) Geigenwild girls had to change their name.

It would not be hard to relate many similar accidents in well-regulated families, happy in everything except the choice of ancestors; but, after one has arranged a pedigree—always leaving room at the top—the selection of family portraits is a very delicate matter. There was, or rather is, Celia Dimmesdale, not of the great New England Dimmesdale-Prynne clan, but of some unknown family. When she married John Smith, who had been at West Point, where they do not study art nor heraldry, she felt the need of family portraits. “They *do* dress up a room so,” she often said. At an auction sale of one of the esteemed residents of the Back Bay, Boston, she picked up an exquisite Lady Hester Dimmesdale, who had, the auctioneer said, come over in the *Mayflower*. She wore a rather low gown; but the auctioneer declared, on the evidence of an old letter, that the picture was painted before she was converted by her second husband, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. Mrs. John Smith, née Dimmesdale—I copy the legend on her cards—had to arrange for the purchase of ten portraits to “lead up” to Lady Hester. Mrs. John Smith was the leading lady at several fashionable army posts until old Mrs. General Grundy pointed out, with the assistance of Brooch, the portrait-painter, that this picture was really a Nell Gwynn. Mrs. Smith was compelled to add a Charles II. to the collection, to throw out Cotton Mather, and to change the religious connections of nine out of ten of her ancestors. It was hard to give up the *Mayflower*; but, when the Smiths had been exiled on an Indian reservation for some years, the

affair was forgotten, and Mrs. Smith, who was of a frugal mind, had Cotton Mather painted over as the kindly Bénédictine monk who converted her ancestor, Charles II., to the true Faith at the eleventh hour. If it were not for the Virginians at the various army posts—and the Virginians have the eyes of lynx where pedigrees are concerned—Mrs. John Smith would have added her husband to the descendants of Pocahontas—but this may come. Then the Rolfes will make a row.

It was different with the Scrimpouls. When Baker Scrimpoul had bought up all the franchises left in Philadelphia, and the magazines printed his picture among the "looters" and "grafters" in that town of brotherly hate, he felt the necessity of a pedigree. He had married one of his daughters into the Assembly; but this was not enough. Somebody recommended old tombstones in Massachusetts, for Scrimpoul sounded like an old New England name. Scrimpoul bought up the undivided fourth of a graveyard at Salem, and managed to root out a Scrimpoul, who was burned as a witch in the same year as Mistress Hibbins, to whom she was related. After the pedigree had been done—the Scrimpouls had connected themselves, through Governor Bellingham, with Charlemagne, of course—it was made known that the buried Scrimpoul was not of the female sex at all, but an honest young African slave who had died of a fever at the age of thirteen. Certain genealogical "sharps" in Boston threw this—in a Sunday edition of the *Philadelphia North American*, I hear—into the face of "honest Tom Scrimpoul." The end is not yet.

There is nobody who believes more in the freedom of the press than the present writer, but the press should be restricted, in a constitutional way by an appeal to a higher law, when it comes to an interference with vested rights. Now, pedigrees, into which brains and money have been put, represent certain vested rights; and yet, we find sent out by respectable publishers, volumes of memoirs which

tend to check the spirit of reverence for the past and to invalidate claims that have laboriously acquired. To destroy a family tradition is to commit a social crime. George Washington was so well satisfied with his ancestors that he never had that feeling of "gone-ness" which affects so many American citizens, and especially citizenesses, who have only crayon presentments, or at best daguerreotypes, while their neighbors, who have been abroad, have hand-painted portraits of long ancestral lines. Charles Carroll, the signer, had merely to write his name to the Declaration to make an ancestor of himself. Benjamin Franklin was always a leveler, or he would have taken care that his descendants should have no difficulty with their escutcheon; but, after all, in his time, the French Revolution had made pedigrees unpopular. In our time it is different. "Madam," said a sad-faced tramp recently to a stern-looking Boston woman, "you may imagine how dark life has been to me, how few advantages I had in my childhood. Our family," he lowered his voice and looked about fearfully, "had *not one* ancestor in the *Mayflower!*" The good woman's eyes filled with unwonted tears.

Speaking of the licentiousness of the press, I may offer an example of the harm that may be done by reckless statements which, even if true, somebody ought to extirpate. Here are the "Letters of the last Colonel of the Irish Brigade." One would think that Irish pedigrees would be safe from the cynicism of printer's ink. They are so elusive. They are like Irish fairies. They go back as far. An Irish family can always drop an obnoxious ancestor, if it wants to. When one has a pedigree from that elder brother of Noah who had a boat of his own that was not a menagerie, one can afford to choose. For example, Mr. George Moore, the Irish Zola, has lately cut off his spiritual ancestor, St. Patrick, because the president of Maynooth Seminary received the King of England with honors; and it is rumored that Mr. William Butler Yeats, the intimate friend of the

leprechawns, is about to renounce the Anglican opinion because the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin refuses to believe in Queen Mab. Still, there are some Irish families who, with a fatal lack of foresight, have clung to their relationship to the brilliant Count O'Connell, the last Colonel of the Irish Brigade, and the great Daniel O'Connell. This means a pedigree of such Irish, Austrian and French splendor that the hated Saxon would go mad if he had to disentangle it. What, then, must be the feelings of several households in Wilmington, Del., Waterbury, Conn., and Memphis, Tenn., whose great-aunt was the third wife of Bartholomew O'Connell, who was the great-uncle of the liberator, and therefore the uncle of Count Daniel Charles O'Connell, to read in these "letters" that the O'Connell pedigree cost £300! and that M. Chérin, the famous genealogist of the Court of Versailles in the reign of Louis XVI. took four years in inventing—I mean in "synthesizing" it! Can anything be more painful? There are even questions raised about the coat of arms. Books of this sort should be kept in locked cases, for the young of our time, even the females, are not sufficiently inclined toward that reverential state of mind which is the very basis of ancestral solidarity.

The ancestral Trusts—I speak, of course, respectfully of the Sons and Daughters of the Revolution and the Colonial Dames, etc.—have so cornered the market that it is difficult to catch a forebear of the required American antiquity. So hard is it now to secure a forefather who lived through the glorious days of seventy-six that there are some who even cast envious and covetous eyes at Benedict Arnold—which accounts for the great circulation of books devoted to the rehabilitation of that interesting person. Benedict Arnold, by judicious manipulation, may be converted in time into a sufficiently good "collateral"—for "collaterals" are the very life of our societies devoted to the worship of ancestors. Without the "collateral" arrangement many honest citizens would

be compelled to gnash their teeth in outer social darkness. I do not mean to offer an excuse for the Dubuque man who tried to attend a fête given by the "Daughters" in Continental uniform because his great-uncle was the son of a nephew by marriage of that Miss Shippen who became Mrs. Benedict Arnold. To say the least, the Dubuque man was immoderate. Still, there is a way out. The assimilation of the Philippines has opened new avenues for those unfortunates who have acquired no commercial position here, to purchase trolley lines in those happy islands. They offer space for congested speculation. Has it occurred to nobody that the societies of the South American Revolution give numerous chances for the enterprising? In almost any South American country you can get up a revolution for a song, and the ingenious mind can easily secure the prestige of one of their risings, and a button more gorgeous than anything yet dreamed of in the conclaves of our own patriotic assemblies.

It is to be regretted that the English do not value our pedigrees as they ought. They assume to think that everybody is delighted to be equal to everybody else here, just because the influence of Rousseau got into the Declaration and made it give that impression. The English have given so little thought to their own ancestors—who have come naturally—that they do not appreciate what wear and tear are forced on us by the acquiring of even one distinguished person for the beginning of a line. Besides, a coat of arms is becoming absolutely necessary to every American. The indignity of going into dinner behind heraldic bearings is felt by us, while an Englishman is quite satisfied to go in behind those that possess them without desiring them himself.

As an instance of the density of our kin across the sea in these matters, so vital to us, let me quote a few words from the Dowager Lady S——y, addressed to her future daughter-in-law. Lady S——y is the mother of the fetching young peer who brought over

the Gaiety troupe in '97, and whose breach of promise suit—Pettie Primrose, of the Empire ballet, was the lady—led to his second bankruptcy. Lady S——y writes:

MY DEAR LOVE:

I am so much obliged for your genealogical charts, and it is a great pleasure to see the copies of the various coats of arms of your mother's family. The colors are certainly very pretty, and our late dear queen had *nothing* like them. I can't make out whether your mother's name was Jinkins or Tinkins—but, you know, it doesn't make much difference, because we think it is so *nice* for you all to be *equal* on your side; and I'm sure that the persons who went over in the *Mayflower* were quite honest tradespeople, with nothing against them, except that they were dissenters of some sort. It's kind of you to tell me about them, but I should never have held it against you. In these days of agricultural depression, we don't object to our sons marrying American girls when they're pretty and not out of women's colleges—we can't stand that—and rich; and Wellesdale, poor boy, says you're very presentable and vastly more entertaining than that awful acting person who mis-

understood him so dreadfully. Colonials, you know—Australians and New Zealanders—and that sort of persons, are out of the question, and Canadians are never rich enough, besides they imitate *us*, and have classes, but you don't, you know—you're all alive, and the daughter of a blacksmith or that sort of thing is just the same to us as the daughter of a great family, like the Tinkins or Jinkins—I hope I have the name quite right. I am, by the way, having my maid wrap up the silver-gilt nutcrackers which I am sending you for the wedding. Tell your dear mother that the diamond tiara will no doubt become you vastly. I have asked Wellesdale to thank your grandfather Tinkins for it. With best love!

You can do nothing with such persons as the Dowager Lady S——y, who, I have heard, really handed over the reprints of the Jinkinses' coats of arms to her maid, to make a frieze for that important woman's sitting-room! Enough has been said, I fancy, to show that some means must be found for supplying our fellow-citizens with pedigrees and forcing aliens to respect them!



AFTER ALL

IF all the love with which woman has loved
 Were melted and molded together,
 And all the faith she has spent on its wraith
 Were woven, a star-spun tether,
 If her fruitless tears and her anxious years
 Were a molten cup to hold it,
 Could the vast sea's rim, or horizon's brim,
 Or the universe wide enfold it?

If all the courage and all the pain
 With which man for ages has loved her,
 Has hoped and striven, endured, forgiven,
 Repented and tried and proved her,
 The war of his life and its hidden strife
 Were illumined for mortals' learning,
 Could Time enroll, or the sky be a scroll,
 Or the earth a pyre for its burning?

Yet we quip and we question whenever we can
 Old life, with its doubts and its lures;
 While woman is woman and man is man
 So long as the world endures.

VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.

A STUDY

SHE'S full of tact—she knows just what
 To say, and when to say it;
 Whatever part falls to her lot,
 She's well equipped to play it.
 Your smiles are mirrored on her face,
 Your sighs are heard, and heeded;
 And tears—the tears that leave no trace—
 Are promptly yours, when needed.

She has soft looks for Tom and Dick,
 Likewise for scapegrace Harry;
 Were she confronted with Old Nick,
 Methinks she'd mildly tarry
 To say a word of soothing praise—
 And e'en that stern saint, Peter,
 Could scarce escape her wiling ways
 If he, by chance, should meet her!

Her mind's alert your thought to grasp
 Practical, or esthetic;
 Her hand is ready with a clasp,
 Tenderly sympathetic;
 She's full of tact—in word and act
 Well doth such grace become her;
 But, she's so full of tact, in fact—
 That—all the men fly from her!

MADLINE BRIDGES.



APPARENT

FARMER—This place of mine is only five minutes' walk from the station.
 SUMMER BOARDER—Then all I can say is that I must have got off at the
 wrong station.



A RUSSIAN NEWSPAPER

CONTRIBUTORS to this paper must sign their names to their contributions,
 as an evidence of good faith, but not for publication, unless we happen to
 be getting out a supplement.

A WAITING RACE

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

RODNEY stopped in the shadow of a honey locust, and leaned upon the pasture wall to watch as pretty a colt race as ever he had seen. He was new to the grass country, English, of the race of Younger Sons, spareish, but well-knit, deeply tanned as to countenance, with a pair of sleepy blue eyes that yet held hints of waking. His passion for walking, with saddled horses always at command, amazed and amused his host, Allen Lewis, the bachelor master of Greenwold. Lewis was master also of the Roxton racing-stable—it was thus he had come to know Blanton—Blanton, of New York, whose letter had been Rodney's open sesame to grass-country hospitality.

Greenwold was so big the pasture at the farther edge of it lay a mile from the house. The rising sun had drawn water; therefore the day was sweltering hot even thus early. Dew lay still in the deeps of the grass, although the cropped turf was dry and springy.

Rodney took off his hat and wiped a very wet forehead, then set a hand edgeways above his eyes the better to see the young racers. There were five—two sorrel fillies, a black colt, a gray and a bay, their course the pasture's round, perhaps a quarter of a mile. At the start the sorrels led, but before they came to the half, the bay shot to the front with the gray well lapped, and the black, as in the beginning, an open last. Yet he ran so well within himself, showed such strength and power, Rodney shook a fist at him, saying: "You rogue! for shame, to let yourself lag behind these others! You're built for a bulldog of the

course. Wonder if you lack grit? If you don't, I lay odds you'll make a king-pin of distance horses—if only these hustling Americans give you time to come to yourself."

"That's what I tell Allen, but oh, you ought to see Isis!" somebody said behind him.

Rodney turned, as though shot, to see a woman in a linen habit, trim but faded, slip from saddle, tie up her reins and turn her horse to grass in the lush meadow.

"Simon Peter loves to race, if he is ten years old. He'd go over the wall in spite of me if I didn't let him get at forbidden grass. He has run—and won—in good company, a heap of times," she said; then, holding out her hand: "Mr. Rodney, I'm Elizabeth Wheat; you are to dine with us Sunday at Wheatstones, you know. Do you love to watch a colt race? I like it best of all. So I come out whenever I hear them running—this pasture is so near I hear them very plain. Father has no colts—he deals only in saddle stock. I don't know what I should do if Greenwold were not so handy, and Allen so kind."

Rodney stammered something—he hardly knew what. Albeit he had made love under many skies, women had been so far mere incidents, more or less poignant, in his phases of existence. Yet this woman, tall, slight almost to angularity, of a roseate, red-lipped pallor, with hazel eyes full of shifting green lights, had suddenly, unaccountably, set his heart beating like a trip-hammer. She showed race as much as any thoroughbred in the pasture, but it was nothing

physical, neither beauty nor the lack of it that made him tremble. A fine, subtle essence of the soul, the spirit had leaped from her eyes to his. Yet he did not wish to touch even so much as her hand. When a loosened tendril of her silky hair blew almost against his cheek he leaned away from it, pretending to reach upward for a fierce and hoary locust thorn.

"The colts all know me; Allen lets me name them, but he won't let me pet them—says it makes them wicked," Elizabeth remarked, after a minute. "He is chock full of old superstitions, you see. I ought also to believe in them—his mother raised me—almost. Until she died two years ago I stayed at Greenwold a heap more than half the time. Mama—my stepmother—cares for nothing but clothes and cooking. She can't understand anybody—any woman body, that is—ever caring for other things. So I'm not much in the house, even now, when I'm at home most of the time. Father is satisfied if I come to dinner and prayers at night. You have not seen him. He's a dear, but—I wonder," a little wistfully, "if you will promise me something?"

"Ask me," Rodney said, looking over her head.

"It—it's nothing—much—yet it may mean a lot," Elizabeth said, hesitatingly. "I can't well tell you the reason for asking—but please say nothing to father, Sunday, about Isis—"

"Isis! The big black mare that looks so sleepy?" Rodney interrupted.

Elizabeth nodded, saying: "Yes—but she wakes up—sometimes. Things happen then—if she is uglier than homemade sin, and crankier than a ram's horn. She's full sister to the black colt you like so, and both of them Isonomy's grandchildren. As Isonomy's granddaughter, I'm sure you would hate to spoil her chance of running dark in the Fairlawn."

"Wouldn't do it for a kingdom!" Rodney protested, suppressing a whistle. "But really, Miss Wheat, I couldn't do it if I would. I have only

seen the beast in stall—Lewis has not shown me his string at work."

"Oh," Elizabeth said, with an accent of distress, "then I ought not to have said anything. Please forget what I said."

"If you will tell me something else," Rodney bargained.

Elizabeth's answer was an inquiring look.

"Can Isis win the Fairlawn? Will she do it?" he ran on.

Elizabeth frowned faintly, saying, with her head up: "Isis can win—she can run over the moon, and come again, if she chooses. But the three times she was out last year she didn't choose. Besides her Isonomy blood, she's kin to the best of all our great, old-time four-milers—Ten Broek, Lexington, Vandal, Lady Rell, ever so many more. Mix all that up with the best legs and the longest reach in the blue grass, and see what it makes."

"You know a lot about horses," Rodney said.

Elizabeth smiled, saying: "Why shouldn't I? I love them so much; besides, there is not much else one can learn about here—except men."

"Men! What do you know of them?" Rodney echoed, laughing.

Elizabeth shrugged faintly. "A heap of things," she said. "Father has them around in shoals—to breakfast, dinner, supper, so I can't help but know how they eat—and make love—and put their consciences quite in their pockets when they trade horses—father as much as any of them; yet in other ways he's the honestest man—and mighty truthful."

Rodney chuckled. "I see I must be very wary of you, Miss Wheat," he said. "About Isis, though—are you going to back her? What odds will you offer?"

Elizabeth shook her head. "I won't bet with you," she answered. "We blue-grass folk are like Arabs, in that we bear a conscience against spoiling the stranger within our gates. Besides, I'm tired of winning trash—gloves, candy and flowers—and people

would be horrified if I won anything else. But this Fairlawn I shall bet money—real money—Allen has promised to put it up for me; no matter about the odds.”

“You had better make me your commissioner—you’d find me awfully discreet,” Rodney said, with a twinkle. “Moderate, too—in consideration of your tip.”

“The tip is a good one—just now, let me give you another. Go to the house, quick! Or, better, come home with me. Don’t you hear the thunder? It will be pouring in a mighty little while,” Elizabeth said, looking anxiously toward the southwest where a wall of purple-black cloud was rising rapidly. In places it was lurid, in other places veined with lightning streaks. It seemed to rest upon another wall—of silver-sheeted rain. Elizabeth, scrambling to saddle, pointed along the way she had come, then called to Rodney: “Follow me!” He did follow, although he did not in the least mind a wetting. He found all Wheatstones’s gates open, Major Wheat himself leaning anxiously out from the piazza to drag him to shelter, and set him in the midst of the half-dozen men already gathered there.

The major was spare, red-faced and somewhat hawk-eyed, with yet a curious trace of likeness to his daughter. He kept Rodney to dinner, to supper, and wanted to send him home in state, upon his own best saddle animal with a groom riding back of him, but to that Rodney would not agree. He chose instead to walk back—with his head in the clouds, dreaming of Elizabeth—Elizabeth whom he had not seen again save at table, although the major had done his best to persuade his daughter to go to the piano and let the stranger hear her in “The Maiden’s Prayer.”

The night was enchanting—moonlit, full of fresh, earthy scents, and soft, ruffling airs. Lewis sat on the steps of Greenwold piazza, and shouted joyously as he sighted Rodney.

“How did you get away? I thought

sure the major’d keep you, at least until to-morrow evening.”

“You knew I was at Wheatstones?” Rodney asked.

Lewis chuckled. “You don’t know niggers—that’s plain,” he said. “They know whatever goes on, on any plantation within ten miles of ’em. Don’t ask me how—all I am sure of is that they do know everybody’s secrets—and a lot more besides.”

“That must be inconvenient—when you’re training a dark horse,” Rodney said, banteringly. “You have, I believe, all black people about your stable—?”

“Whom money won’t buy. It’s been tried—more than once,” Lewis interrupted; “at least, as regards stable doings. My boys know I trust them entirely. So far, they’ve been true to the trust.”

“That’s lucky,” Rodney returned, lighting the pipe Lewis had pushed toward him.

For a minute there was silence; then Lewis said, a little hesitatingly: “I heard also about Elizabeth—how she met you—and all that. So I had better tell you why she is so free here. I’m going to marry her some day. I don’t want you to think her forward—”

“Oh, I say! You want to make me out a cad!” Rodney protested. “I only think she is delightfully out of the common.”

“She does spoil your taste for other girls. I found that out by trying to court another one. The other girl was prettier, too—heap prettier,” Lewis said, chuckling; “but she showed me something else—that I was in love with Elizabeth—before I’d fooled myself saying the little Wheat child was just like my sister. I reckon you wonder why I don’t marry her right off. Lord knows I’d like to—so much it makes me cussing mad to know I can’t. You see, the case stands this way—the major is a thoroughbred, of the old sort—my father was another—too old to change his ways in anything. Open house, people coming and going, trafficking, trading, are the breath of life

to him. He believes all the time he's right on the edge of making a fortune, when really he is spending and losing one instead. Cleary won't let him see it—won't let me nor anybody show him the truth—Jap Cleary, who owns the bank in town and I don't know what-all besides. The major is wrapped up in him—tells him everything, and believes every word he says. He's low-bred, but mighty anxious to be accepted as a gentleman, and crazy to marry Elizabeth. So he's letting the major have money—as much as Wheatstones is worth—laughs over balances on the wrong side, and tells the old man to go ahead—he has got the bank behind him. By-and-bye, when he has got his clutch on everything, he thinks Elizabeth will marry him—to save her father from being turned out of house and home. He knows that would kill the major. I know it, too. I also know it would not bother the old gentleman the least bit to owe all the place is worth—so long as his creditor didn't bother him. Until I'm ready to be his creditor I can't ask him for his daughter."

"I see. This Cleary would turn rusty if he knew—" Rodney began.

Lewis laughed grimly. "Mighty rusty," he said. "Cleary suspects I'm in his way, but he knows I won't go in debt; also that a place like this takes a lot of keeping up, not to name the cost of breeding stock on fashionable lines. So he thinks his money holds me safe. I'll never come in for a windfall. I'm hoping to show him his mistake—before a month is out. If I do it—well, you must stay on for the wedding. You won't have to wait long."

"You mean you are going to win the Fairlawn with Isis?" Rodney said, turning his face from the tell-tale moonshine.

Lewis nodded. "Perhaps," he said. "But she's so uncertain, I'm really banking on the Ruby."

"Let me see them at work, please! You may trust me, if I haven't got a black skin," Rodney said, getting up and yawning.

Lewis also rose. "I would have

asked you out long ago," he said, "if it had not seemed a shame to wake a man before it was fairly dawn."

Rodney got up in time—possibly because he did not sleep all night. Elizabeth's voice haunted him, Elizabeth's eyes laughed at him through the Summer dark. One minute he told himself he must go straight away—the next he had found a hundred reasons for staying. Elizabeth was the sum and root of them all—he was still sane enough to understand that. He ended by a compromise with himself—he would stay until the Fairlawn had been run, then go, saying no word, making no sign. Elizabeth belonged to another, a better man. Even if she did not, it would matter nothing to him. Marriage was out of the question unless he married money. Elizabeth would bring to her husband only her sweet self.

Rodney kept faith with himself—at least as to words. But his eyes told Elizabeth many, many things. They met casually almost every day. If they touched hands Elizabeth flushed faintly, and Rodney looked away. Intuitively he knew she understood. So, knowing, he began to wonder if she really loved Lewis, or if she had not mistaken for love the affection of use and wont. Experience had made him something of a cynic, yet never once did he let himself think that Elizabeth had possibly been tempted by Lewis's possessions.

Elizabeth did understand. The appeal of passion unspoken touched her the more nearly that Lewis's love-making had been in a degree commonplace, despite its glamouring secrecy. She had known ever since she was in short frocks that she would be likely to marry him, and although she loved him dearly, he was not the least bit her ideal lover.

What wonder that her mind was full of Rodney, upon a morning when she rode out very early, with a rose in her breast, a song on her lips! She was sure she should find him in wait on the turnpike, but only long shadows filled the white road. She galloped

down it a mile, then turned into a narrow track running up the creekside. There she rode so slowly that Simon Peter's hoofs made no sound on the soft, black earth. After a while the track bent sharply. Turning the elbow of it Elizabeth ran upon Cleary, deep in converse with Dan Dycus, one of Lewis's stablemen.

That meant treachery on the face of it. Elizabeth turned to ride back and warn Allen, but Simon Peter whinnied joyously to Cleary's horse. Cleary turned as though shot, scowling ferociously. The negro leaped the fence at the other side of the road and ran away. Elizabeth made to send Simon Peter after him, but Cleary caught her reins, and said, his face purple, his eyes narrowed to slits: "You don't get away so easy, young lady! I've found out a heap of things this morning, but there's one more I want to know."

"Indeed!" Elizabeth said, her eyes blazing. "Let go my reins, please! There is nothing in the world I can tell you."

"Yes, there is!" Cleary roared. "You can tell me you'll marry me! You—you deceitful thing! I'm ashamed of myself—to want you as I do. But I mean to have you! Hear that? Don't you fool yourself thinking Al Lewis will win the Fairlawn, and a pot of money. I'll beat him, sure. And unless you take me, it'll be worse for—a heap of people."

"Let go my bridle!" Elizabeth persisted, tugging hard at the reins.

Cleary held fast. Between them the reins were drawn so short that Simon Peter felt the curb, and reared a little, half throwing Elizabeth against Cleary's breast. Instantly he flung an arm about her; as quickly she swung her whip and welted him full in the face. Cleary gave a savage grunt but held her fast, saying, as he tried to turn her face to his:

"My way is to give a kiss for a blow."

"Not this time," Rodney said, wrenching Cleary out of saddle and slamming him hard on the ground. Cleary looked up to see the Englishman standing over him with doubled

fists. As he lurched to his feet Rodney said, thickly: "Want any more? If you don't, get out—quick!"

Cleary did not speak; with a sort of wild-beast snarl he mounted and galloped away. Rodney turned to Elizabeth. "I ought to have killed him," he said. "It would have been a good thing all round."

"Take care! He—he will try to kill you," Elizabeth answered, going dead white.

Rodney laid his cheek against her hand, and almost whispered: "Should you care—much?" Then, as he felt the hand tremble, he ran on: "See what comes of being too virtuous! I walked out this morning instead of riding—because of my conscience—if I had had no conscience, we should have been riding another way."

"You followed Dan?" Elizabeth said, interrogatively.

Rodney nodded. "I saw him skulking—a stable skulker means stable harm," he said. "But the black beggar has not plotted to harm the Ruby—I heard nearly all that was said. This Cleary is really the clumsiest thing out when it comes to a racing conspiracy. Dan gave away—well, secrets, readily enough—except about Isis; to have mentioned her chances would have been a slur to his own idol, the Ruby. Cleary wanted him to do the Ruby some harm—just what, I couldn't gather. It was fine to hear the black fellow spit on his suggestion; so I think we had better not tell Allen—everything. The Ruby might go off a lot through missing his regular rubber, and I've a notion the Ruby is the real thing this time. The Star-Ruby blood is sweeping all before it. But we may be sure of one thing—Cleary will see to it that whoever wins over him must risk the chance of losing as much."

"Yes?" Elizabeth said, looking away. "Good-bye until Fairlawn Day. I am going away—for a week."

With the last word she tried to release her hand. Rodney kissed it and let it go, saying, "Good-bye—sweet-heart," the last word under his breath.

II

THE Fairlawn, properly the Fairlawn Vase, was a distance race, three miles and a furlong, open to three-year-olds and upward, carrying weight for age. Among grass-country fixtures it was *the* classic, its beginning shrouded in misty traditions, with yet enough authentic history to make winning it a turfman's crown; this, notwithstanding the stake was none so rich, and the Vase itself only a plain and very ugly silver jug, which must be won three years running before the winner could lawfully keep it. Nobody had thus far won it three times, so every year the old jug, newly furnished, was filled with gold-pieces and set up to be run for. The running was always a battle royal between nearly the best in training. Millionaires even did not disdain to send back famous grass-country exiles, at great cost and charges, solely for the glory of it. So whoever won it needed luck no less than a good horse. It was nearly always a mighty open race—so open there were long odds in the betting.

This year it was different. Lewis gnashed his teeth to find that the Ruby, officially Royal Ruby, opened at even money and soon went to odds on. He was even more disquieted to find that there was an eleventh-hour contender for the prize in Petronel, one of the blue-grass exiles, the pride of an Eastern stable, whose owner, it was whispered, had been plunging disastrously ever since the season opened. Petronel was four years old, the Ruby three. There was Isis, to be sure, but Isis was an unreckonable quantity. If she would run as she could—Lewis let himself get no farther. He had backed her reasonably as became owner's pride, with very long odds, but his hope was really the rangy, slashing blood-bay whose coat vied with his name-jewel in splendor. Isis had no looks at all—she was big and lumbering, between brown and black, rusty as to coat even in perfect fettle, with a low head, and a way of holding it as though oppressed by the weight

of maledictions from the bettors whose money she had burned up.

Lewis had looked at her three times in stall, then slipped into his innermost pocket the gold-piece Elizabeth had bidden him lay on the mare's chances. He knew the coin—it was his mother's last gift to his betrothed. If Isis won, Elizabeth should profit as though he had made the bet. But the chance of her winning seemed scant and slight as he watched the parade—each of the ten other starters seemed likelier to go the route, if not to stay the distance.

He feared only three as against the Ruby—Minuet, California-bred, trained by a turf wizard, and rated the king-pin among racing four-year-olds; Petronel, the returned exile, and Sandown, a three-year-old, son to Persimmon, English in all but the fact that he had been foaled on American soil. Minuet was a rangy, long-striding sorrel; Petronel a bay as red as the Ruby. Sandown showed a white star and a white hind foot to set off his rich brown coat. In the ruck there were blacks, bays, a sorrel or so, and a dingy gray, good horses all, but hardly Vase winners unless by the merest luck.

The biggest of all Fairlawn crowds thronged the course and watched the parade. Lewis's pair came last—with the crowd rising at the Ruby and clapping ironically for Isis.

The start was a furlong up-course. Elizabeth, at the lawn-rail with Rodney beside her, kept her eyes glued to the glass. Isis had drawn the outside, the Ruby the rail; thus when the ragged line broke, to a belated "They're off!" there was a fleck of Roxton cream and scarlet at either end. The line straightened a bit as it bore down on the stand. There it was like a file of cavalry. The Ruby's chin was pulled into his breast; so was Sandown's. Minuet ran high-headed and freely; Petronel had batted ears, ready to savage whatever he might; Isis plodded, and the ruck pranced and danced. At the half she had fallen back half a length. The light-weighted division had gone to the

front, as though fully persuaded they could make it a runaway race in spite of the distance.

Lewis stood in the infield a little way from the finish-line. He did not dream Cleary was his elbow-neighbor until he heard a man upon Cleary's other side say, guardedly: "Remember! Fifty thousand! Not a cent less!" and Cleary's answer: "Hush! Don't talk here! The race ain't over. Time enough for money to talk when you've won it."

Lewis did not turn his head—he had no need. He knew the other voice for that of Petronel's trainer. Cleary, then, was behind the horse's appearance in the Fairlawn. Rodney had told Lewis only enough of his morning encounter to put him on his guard; still, Lewis had suspected strongly that Cleary knew how the land lay. Now he was certain of it—certain also that Cleary had plotted his ruin. Quietly, cautiously he edged back through the crowd until he was out of eye-shot by the pair. He felt singularly calm, although his muscles hardened, stiffened, until he seemed to himself to be made of steel.

As the race swept past the second time, the ruck still led it, but Isis, the despised, had surprising company. She ran bunched with Minuet, Petronel and the Ruby. Sandown was half a length ahead, and going easily. Rodney whistled softly. "A waiting race," he said in Elizabeth's ear.

Elizabeth did not answer—she was too rapt in watching for words. At the half in this second round, Petronel and Minuet flashed ahead of everything. The ruck began tailing—Sandown was, for a breath, swallowed up in it but ran gamely out, hanging at the flanks of the leaders. The Ruby was level with him, and still under wraps. Isis ran at the Ruby's saddle skirts, neither gaining nor losing through the next quarter. In the homestretch she lagged until daylight showed between her and the first flight. But there were no groans for her as she swept past—there was still a mile to go. When the racers came again, for that long last

time, who could tell what might be leading?

On, on, still on, a whirlwind of hoofs, of calls, of shouted encouragement, accented now and again by the cruel whistle of catgut, the flying horses swept over the dun ribbon of earth. The ruck jockeys pulled up at the half—Sandown also was clearly out of it, though still running gamely. At the next quarter Minuet shut up like a jack-knife. The wise men, the very wise men, groaned to see it. Petronel and the Ruby ran like a team in front, both in fighting tempers, their riders watching each other like gladiators in mortal combat. At the eighth they were still running head and head, fighting it out five lengths before Isis, undoubtedly victors in the race. Isis had run so far untouched of whip or spur, her rider doing no more than keep her straight. He was black, weazened, wiry, with a voice like a flute. High and shrill he shouted as he gave Isis three savage slashes and sent his spurs in deep. "Now you g'wan home! Go—fer Miss 'Lizabef!"

The watchers saw, as they heard him, a long dark blur with a rainbow streak above it, stream forward, stretching, straining, leaping, gathering, thrusting at distance as a giant might thrust his lance—saw it lock the leaders, run level between them, and keep on, on, a demon red head, with flaring nostrils, bursting eyeball keeping pace on either side. Thus three abreast, neither an inch to the bad, the good, they swept to the finish.

Lewis watched them with blazing eyes, almost forgetful of Cleary's neighborhood, until he heard a mumbled, bellowing shout, and saw, apparently in answer to it, Petronel carom violently against Isis, knocking her out of stride and trying to savage. It seemed she must foul the Ruby—muddle the issue of the race. But no!—with a wild, plunging scramble she caught her feet, stretched, went down almost flat, came up with a long, leaping bound, stretched again, greyhound fashion, and thrust her nose under the wire, even with the Ruby.

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Bedlam broke loose then—oaths, shouts, cries. Lewis wheeled upon Cleary. "You will buy Petronel at fifty thousand—even though he lost the Vase," he said; "otherwise I will prove that—your jockey rode to orders."

"I don't care what you do—or try," Cleary said, angrily; then, with a taunting laugh: "You've lost more than you've won—that English fellow has got Elizabeth Wheat—"

Lewis gripped him before he could say more. Half-strangled, Cleary drew a knife, and thrust with all his might at his captor's breast. The knife went slashing until its point struck something hard. Before Cleary could turn it, a dozen men had dragged him away from Lewis. He tried to laugh again as breath came back, but cowered and fell silent after a look around. He saw that even his rescuers despised him.

Everybody felt that the crowd was wrought to the verge of tragedy. Like the wise men they were, the judges agreed upon a miracle—nothing short of a miracle could have made them see the Ruby's nose even an eyelash in

front. As the boards went up accordingly, cheer followed cheer, exultant, full of heart, withal touched with savagery. It was "Roxton! Roxton! Roxton first and second! Hurrah for Roxton! Hurrah-h-h for Lewis!! Hurrah-h-h! Hurrah-h-h-h!! Hurrah-h-h-h!!!"

Lewis heard them with tears he recked not raining over a face white as death. Elizabeth amazed him as she wiped them away—a strangely adorable Elizabeth, who had somehow come to him through the thick of the throng. He smiled down at her shyly as he took a gold-piece from his pocket, and pointed to a dent in the middle of it, saying: "This is what saved me. Are you glad I kept it?"

Elizabeth answered only with her eyes—illuminated eyes that told Rodney many things. She had loved his love, but not as she loved and would always love Lewis's very self. He went up to them and took their hands, saying with an odd, diffident smile: "Mind you have the wedding over quickly, even though I can't stay for it—I have just got news that calls me away."



WERE JOY TO COME

WERE Joy to come, and say, so tenderly,
 "Dear friend, I have a little hour for thee,
 And thou, I know, hast long had need for me,"

The whole of life would thrill in that brief space,
 The past forgotten, though its cold, dead face
 Might catch a glamour from this later grace.

And I should say, "O Joy, thy feet were slow;
 I put my hand in thine, and whither go
 I know not, nor, rejoicing, care to know."

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



BRIGGS—How is Spangler's credit?
 GRIGGS—First rate. He owes everybody.

THE HUSBAND'S PART

By James H. Metcalfe

“A LITTLE more paste here, Andrews.”

The maid brought the ivory box, removed the gold lid, and lightly touched a point of red to the nail of a finger on the hand her mistress held out to her. Then a little powder, and the ivory-and-gold brush in a moment left the nail as softly shining and flushing as a June dawn.

All of the things on the dressing-table were ivory and gold. And they harmonized ravishingly with the woman to whom they ministered, for she, too, was ivory and gold—a face clear and white as new ivory, hair gold untainted by alloy. Her gown of heavy silk was like old ivory, and it was embroidered with gold.

“Surely, I am very fair.”

Mrs. Trent stared at the beautiful face the mirror of her dressing-table framed, and nodded with triumphant conviction. There was, indeed, no doubt that she spoke truly. Her searching gaze studied every detail of the picture—the eyes, blue, lustrous, deepened by the long, sweeping lashes, the perfect curve of the brows beneath the bronze pyramid of her hair, the delicate lines of the nose, the scarlet glory of the mouth, the vivid white of the rounded flesh. Each detail was flawless, and she nodded again.

“Yes, I am very fair—‘an angel,’ he called me last night—and as pure,” he said.”

As she recalled the praise, her eyes deepened and brightened, an added flush mantled her cheek, and her lips curved happily.

“But am I?”

Now the smile passed, the luster faded from her gaze, her brows straightened.

“I wonder if I am really a good woman? Would a good woman be tempted, as I am tempted, by her own heart, if her heart were pure? And I am so tempted! No, no, I am not good, not good. My love is a sin—I should send him away. I ought never to see him again; but—oh, I cannot!”

A maid entered the dressing-room, carrying two clusters of roses, one red, the other white.

“With Mr. Mannering’s compliments,” she said, as she laid the white blossoms the nearer to her mistress.

There was no need of explanation for the others. Mr. Trent always ordered red roses for his wife.

“You may go now,” Mrs. Trent said to the servant, who lingered; “I won’t put on the flowers until the carriage is ready.”

The lady had ten minutes for solitary reflection, and she intended giving it to the roses—which should she wear, red roses, or white?

She was startled by the irony of fate, which, while she was examining her morals, sent her white roses from the man she loved, red roses from her husband. And red roses were symbols of passion, and white roses were symbols of purity! It was as if fate jested with her and her husband, that it should let him send her such signs of eager love—for he did not love her, nor she him—while it allowed her lover to offer her the white emblems of purity, though

his whole desire cried out to her that she should abandon purity, and her heart echoed all his words.

She looked again in the mirror, without vanity, curiously. Could anyone detect in her face the evil war of passions within her? No, surely. Her face was cold, reserved—save when she thought of Mannering, and at least she could retain its ordinary expression as a mask when they met before others.

"My face is as hypocritical as the rest of me," she thought, with bitter self-contempt.

Then, being a woman, she suddenly strangled her emotions, lest she should cry, and thus dim the beauty of her eyes. She could restrain her feelings for the sake of her appearance, but she could not dominate her emotions for the sake of her soul, which shows that she was essentially human and very feminine. And so, being both human and feminine, she was not altogether just, despite her pride in the possession of that virtue, for she condemned herself utterly, when there was much to excuse her folly of the heart.

She had married at twenty a man who, ten years her senior, had already exhausted life. The fresh beauty of his bride held him hardly through the solitude *à deux* of the honeymoon. Afterward, he lost all interest in her. She completed his establishment, and beyond that he cared nothing save that she must remain high above any suspicion. His selfishness commanded her immaculateness. To the extent of her reputation she was a vital part of him; beyond that she was nothing. He treated her with deference outwardly; he never spoke to her but with entire courtesy, and his bearing toward her was without fault. He displayed always in her presence the same gentle graces of conduct that he would have offered to any woman—the house-keeper, for instance—and no more.

Of the real being within his polished shell, his wife knew practically nothing. There was only one exception—she knew that his egotism was swift to take alarm at any exceptional interest on her part displayed toward another man.

He was quick to jealousy, and keen to discover any hint of heart-wandering on her part. Twice she had provoked him in this direction, though she was in each case quite innocent in fact. Now, after four years of marriage, however, love had at last come into her life.

For two years she had cherished a bread-and-butter adoration of her husband. It had beaten out its life against the wall of his irresponsiveness. For a year and a half she had gone about heart-hungry, wondering, despairing. Now, for six months, she had known the alternate heaven and hell of a great passion. In justice let it be understood that she had fought against this love with her best strength, but it had been too strong for her. At last she had confessed the truth to herself—worse, she had confessed it to the man himself.

Under the circumstances, this result was not to be wondered at. They had met at the seaside through common friends. Her husband was often absent, and a natural enjoyment of each other's society brought Mrs. Trent and Mannering often together. He was quite without close ties; she was worse. They were sympathetic, lonely. He was a handsome, thoughtful man, hardly older than she. Naturally, they had grown to love each other before either suspected the danger. When, at last, they discovered the truth, it was too late. Mannering, who was by no means a typical breaker of hearts, lost his head completely, and begged her to run off with him. She repudiated this wicked suggestion with tenderness and scorn equally balanced. But his urgency left her with despair in her bosom, for imagination constantly whispered of the joy of life always with him.

Then some officious friend called Trent's attention to the intimacy between his wife and Mannering. Trent very coldly and elegantly insulted his informant, then set himself to watch. It took him little time to discover the mutual infatuation of the lovers. He learned, however, nothing culpable beyond a sighing passion. None the

less, he was in a white rage that his wife should have imperiled her reputation. This folly on her part touched him deeply in his chief attribute, his pride. He called her to him, and with exquisite bearing and polished speech, though not less bluntly, he bade her never again allow Mannering to enter their doors. Then, to make safety beyond possibility of cavil, he took her back to town.

Mrs. Trent obeyed his command, literally. Mannering did not once visit her in her own home, but she saw him almost daily, here and there, as opportunity gave, at luncheon, tea, dinner, ball and soirée. And this condition fed briskly the fuel on the altar of love.

II

THE maid came to announce the carriage. Mrs. Trent picked up the white blossoms. She had made her choice. They were the symbols of purity; it was fitting that she should wear such to meet her lover—he would be at the Harneds' that night. She remembered he had talked rather wildly yesterday, had been imperious, impassioned, and, as his words seemed to draw her against her will, it was as well that to-night she should be entrenched behind these bulwarks of purity. At the first glance he would see them, and they would indicate clearly to him the fact that he must not try to win her from her duty.

And, too, it was pleasant to wear them because he had sent them. Righteousness and inclination marched side by side.

The fact that this esoteric power of the roses must be thwarted by the lover's armor of love never once occurred to Mrs. Trent. She failed to take into consideration the fallacy in her logic which might have been discovered from the correlation of his sending white roses and his interpretation of them. She had arrived at her decision, and was content in it.

In the hall, her husband complimented her on her appearance, with

precisely the amount of emotion he gave to his praise of the grooming of the horses when they passed out to the carriage. He noticed that she did not wear his roses, and had a suspicion as to the source of those he saw at her corsage, but he said nothing. Only, he determined that he must be more than ever watchful. If she deliberately deceived him in any way, she must be restrained at once. If restraint were without avail, she must go from him. He must not be compromised. He sighed as he leaned back in the carriage. Nothing and no one could be trusted. It was most annoying. Then, with quiet zest, he began retailing to the beautiful woman by his side the latest gossip of the clubs.

It had begun to rain softly—a miserable night. Mrs. Trent snuggled within the recesses of her opera-cloak, and loathed the brilliant inanity of her husband's chatter. The horror of having to listen to a history of Wadsworth's latest drunken witticism when one's destiny was at stake! The ghastly irony of telling Ponsonby's exploits at polo to one who was confronting heaven and hell—and could not distinguish between them!

The patter of the rain was almost welcome. Its dreariness was harmonious with the melancholy of her thoughts, and its gentle sound was a complement to her husband's speech, to which she could listen rather than to his words. The fancy came to her that the drops blown glistening against the carriage window were the very tears of heaven shed for the sake of her despair. But, after all, their sympathy was too violent a product of her own strained imagination to soothe her dreary mood. They only served to aid her in a desolate oscillation between intense self-pity when she forgot her husband's voice, and crisp detestation of him when her ear harkened to his phrases.

Her only ray of light in all the darkness of her mourning was the pale blur of the white roses at her breast. She had chosen righteousness. But this satisfaction of conscience was, alas!

such a feeble thing when her heart cried out wildly for its desire.

Duty is as cold as justice, on which it is built, but love is a flame that may light the world, or, turned back on the breast whence it springs, consume its source and leave only the ashes of life. This thought was in Mrs. Trent's mind as the carriage stopped. She gave a sigh of relief that they had arrived. These fancies were torture.

It was not long after her arrival at the reception when Mannering came to Mrs. Trent and made his formal greeting. The others in her group moved on, and the two were, for the moment, alone.

"I must talk with you, to-night," he insisted, "I must. You will not refuse?" His tone was peremptory, impassioned.

At his words, her heart leaped, half in joy, half in fear.

"Not yet," she answered, hesitatingly. "*He* is staying only a moment. After he has gone, then, why—" Her voice trailed into a shamed silence. She dropped her eyes from the man's eager face to the white roses—she needed their reminder that she had chosen the better course. Just now her weakness made her wonder whether, after all, she would have the strength to resist his pleading, when her own heart must echo his every prayer. She turned eagerly to an acquaintance who approached—any distraction was an aid to goodness.

III

It was an hour later when Mannering led Mrs. Trent into an alcove in the hall, beyond the library door. Here, there was room for two, and they were safe enough from any interruption by the crowd that came and went in the hall.

Mannering wasted no time.

"I have everything arranged," he said. "We shall take the train to Gosport to-morrow night at eleven o'clock. I shall have my automobile waiting in the next street south of yours at ten-

thirty, to take you to the station. At Gosport we shall go directly on board my yacht. Your husband will get a divorce; I shall marry you. By the time we return, the scandal will be dead."

The woman had been listening eagerly, her heart shaking, her eyes shining. She had forgotten the white roses. She felt herself swept onward by the fierce current of his masterful purpose. Her glance rested gladly on the firm face, with its aureole of vital force, on the compact frame, graceful, charged with energy. And her heart echoed every word, as she had known it would, and cried out to her that she must yield—every word, save one, her heart echoed as he spoke, and that one was "scandal."

At that fatal word, so hideous to a woman, her drowsing conscience revived, and she dropped her eyes on the roses she wore. She had chosen righteousness!

His eyes followed hers, and his features softened from the harshness of command.

"My roses," he whispered. "And you wear them on your heart, as you shall wear me, always."

But that ugly word still sounded in her ears, and fortified her resolve.

"No," she said, deliberately, "I shall not elope with you. You know I love you, but I have decided. My duty is here with him. He is not cruel in any way to excuse such a sin on my part."

"He does not love you!"

"I cannot justly reproach him for that. Neither do I love him. I cannot help it, any more than I can help loving you. But I can help running away. And so—and so—I shall stay, and break my heart!"

Her voice was a sob.

The man made no pleas; he merely spoke with intense conviction.

"You must—you will—go with me. I shall expect you to-morrow night, as I have said. Don't be later than a quarter to eleven."

"I will not go."

"And I say you shall!" The note

of the man who loves and dominates was in his voice. But now it changed utterly, as he whispered: "Oh, how I love you!"

With that vocal caress thrilling her, she moved back into the crowd on his arm.

"Will your husband come back for you?" Mannering asked, as they passed toward the drawing-room.

"I don't expect him," Mrs. Trent answered, "and I shall go at once."

Mannering had secured his hat and coat, and was waiting to put her in her carriage when she reappeared.

"I, too, am leaving," he explained, with a smile. "My hansom is just behind your brougham. Appearances do not matter now. There is no time for scandal before to-morrow night."

Again that word! Mrs. Trent shuddered as they stepped out into the night, and her resolve, which had weakened at the sight of him as she came down the stair, now strengthened again. Certainly, she would not go. Did not her roses prove the purity of her purpose? Ah, she had forgotten to tell him the significance of the flowers! A pity it was now too late!

The night had grown colder; a fall of sleet had been followed by a heavy, fog-like mist. Again Mrs. Trent shuddered, this time with physical, not moral, dislike of her environment. Quite unbidden, a picture rose against the blackness of the night, a picture of a yacht gliding smoothly over starlit waters, and, on the deck, two persons, quite alone, side by side, very close together, a man and a woman. She could see the man's face distinctly—a strong, eager, wholesome face. The woman's face she would not see.

In justice to her husband, Mrs. Trent shut the eye of her imagination, banished the seductive vision, and hurried down the steps. From the shelter of the carriage she reached out her hand to Mannering, and said, rather coldly:

"Good night."

"Good night," he answered, confidently, "and au revoir until—tomorrow night."

"No," she declared, firmly.

"Until to-morrow night," he repeated, steadfastly; and the carriage rolled away.

In the solitude of the brougham, the woman experienced the fallacious joys of the martyr. Her conscience rejoiced in her refusal of the happiness offered her, but all the rest of her nature revolted with a vigor that set her moaning.

One thing her mind realized in this crisis of her emotions—that she must give up the deadly delight of Mannering's companionship. Without it life could mean little, but she was awake at last to the danger she ran. His domination of her was so delicious she could not venture to pit her feeble strength against its charm. Her sense of justice grew larger, and she perceived what had hitherto been hidden, that her duty to her husband forbade her to run such risks against his honor. A little gasping sob marked her determination never to see Mannering again, at least, not in tête-à-tête. And then the stars in their courses warred against her.

As the carriage rounded a corner, there was a violent jolt, then another, and another—at last a full stop. Mrs. Trent uttered a sharp cry of fear, but, before she had time to repeat it, the carriage door was opened hastily, and in the light of a street lamp she recognized the features of Mannering, who stood uncovered before her.

"Don't be frightened," he said, "it is——"

"I am not." "Now," she might have added, if prudence had not silenced honesty. "But do, please, put on your hat. You will catch cold."

In her tone was all the woman's concern for the man she loves. Mannering hastened to obey.

"One of the horses is down," he explained. "I was just behind you. Wait a moment, and I will see how things are."

He went away, and she forgot, in her joy at his presence, that she had forsworn this joy for all time to come. And she was still athrob with wonder-

ful happiness—just because the one man in the world for her was close at hand in this moment of mild disaster—when Mannering returned.

"That off horse is down again—he's an unbalanced brute, anyhow—always stumbling. But the street is like ice to-night; I oughtn't to blame him, I suppose—especially as it gives me a chance to be of use to you. Wait just a moment again."

He disappeared, and Mrs. Trent remained quite uninquisitive, still athrill with that wonderful delight. And this time conscience did not rebuke her. How could it, when the matter was none of her making?

It was ten minutes, perhaps, before Mannering came back to her. Meantime, she sat listening vaguely to the sounds of activity just in front of her. It did not matter that the horse had fallen. Usually she would have been alive with sympathy for the creature, alarmed lest he were bruised, for she was a sensitive and kindly woman, gentle toward all things. But to-night her interest was in nothing except him. She had before her a vision of his face, and it filled all her horizon. Among the noise of all who had gathered around the fallen horse, she heard only his voice, as it sounded from time to time in crisp commands. Her only active thought of it was as to the contrast it would have presented to her husband's cold drawl had he been present. Mannering's voice was typical of the man, alert, yet orderly; masterful, yet with a captivating sweetness. She started with delight when it sounded again at the carriage window.

"I'm afraid he's lamed himself too badly to be driven, or, at least, a walk will be his limit. I'll send you on in a hansom. Better, you take mine."

Without more ado, he opened the door, and helped her out of the brougham and into the hansom, which at his gesture had drawn alongside.

But before the window of the cab was lowered, she leaned forward and thrust the roses into his unwilling hands.

"He sent me red roses—I wore yours instead. If yours had been red and his white, I should still have worn the white. They mean the right, you know—that is why I wore them. I will not see you again—not to-morrow—"

The window slammed, the driver cracked his whip, the cab rolled away, leaving Mannering alone in the street, in his hand a cluster of white roses.

IV

TRENT, finding himself bored at the gathering to which he had betaken himself, decided to return to the Harneds' and escort his wife home. That this would hardly gratify her he could not doubt, but, despite that important fact, it would be a very proper thing to do, a most courteous and considerate act, and Trent's courtesy, especially toward himself, was unflinching. He was, then, greatly chagrined when he found that he had arrived five minutes too late to carry out his plan of politeness. Unfortunately, there was no help for it, so the disappointed husband accepted a cab, and was driven rapidly homeward.

It was with something of a shock that, on reaching the house, he learned that Mrs. Trent had not yet arrived. He was seriously disturbed, and with reason. When one's wife has started for home before one's self, by the same route, but fails to reach her destination after a proper lapse of time, there is room for alarm—especially if one be of a suspicious turn of mind—and Trent was excessively suspicious.

He canvassed all the possibilities, and, as the time passed, settled on morbid certainty. At the end of ten minutes he no longer retained a doubt. Evidently his wife was the victim of an accident, or he was the victim of a design. At any rate, he must know the truth.

He went into the wide hall, where, to the servant whom he bade hold his coat for him, he mentioned casually

that he had an appointment at the club, and ordered a hansom. When it reached the door, he allowed the servant to give the club as the destination, but no sooner had the corner of the street been passed than he pushed his stick through the trap, and directed the driver to hurry to Mannering's chambers.

The mental working by which he arrived at this course of conduct was simplicity itself. He was jealous, without loving, than which no jealousy is more ignoble. Full of suspicions, which facts had, to a certain extent, justified, he was keenly eager to know the worst, if worst there was. And here, certainly, there was ample ground for harrowing apprehensions! If he should find Mannering in, the evidence of his guilt would be almost conclusive, since he undoubtedly left the Harneds' at the same time as did Mrs. Trent.

And yet, there was the matter of the coachman and footman. She would hardly dare drive in her own brougham with two of the Argus-eyed on the box, straight up to Mannering's bachelor apartment, and enter there, while the carriage waited. Still, servants might be bribed. Trent, who had no self-respect, in spite of his egotism, and therefore respected no one else, was not at all sure of the probity of his servants, or their devotion to himself. Or his wife might at that instant be driving about the streets with Mannering, in the isolation of the brougham—cozy enough, for all the nasty weather.

Well, he would soon know, or be able to guess. He had an excuse for his call on Mannering, and, in any event, there would be no scandal. If the worst were true, he would nevertheless comport himself with that distinguished courtesy which was his crown of virtue.

It would be too much to say that Trent was not at all disturbed, for he was most seriously agitated in the centre of his being—his egotism. But that same egotism left him quite undismayed as to his conduct, for one

who possesses tremendous egotism, and no self-respect, can never be at a loss. And, too, of course, a sufficient pride in one's manner will easily carry the possessor through the most trying ordeal.

On reaching Mannering's chambers, Trent received another shock.

"Is Mr. Mannering in?" he asked of the man who answered his ring.

"Yes, sir."

And in those uncompromising words Trent received the shock. He had anticipated lies, evasions, doubts, hesitations, and he had received only a downright "Yes, sir." It would seem, then, that, after all, he had been mistaken in his surmises. It was something of a trial to the man's egotism to acknowledge that his judgment had been at fault. Happily, his safety as a husband would console him, ultimately. Meantime, he must see Mannering, though he detested the prospect, and explain the occasion of his visit.

"Ask Mr. Mannering if he will see Mr. Trent."

The servant went away, and returned promptly with the assurance that Mr. Mannering would be very pleased. A minute later, the two men stood face to face.

"So glad to have found you in," Trent asserted. "It's a little political idea of mine. You know Broderick so well I thought you might use your influence, you know, and get him to write a pamphlet on the financial question. His name would carry it, and it would do a lot of good."

"Why, yes, I think I could persuade him," Mannering answered, with much enthusiasm. Indeed, Trent was astonished by the other's eagerness.

He did not guess that this fervor owed its origin to a reaction from a very natural alarm that had been provoked by his man's announcement that his midnight visitor was the husband of the woman with whom he intended to elope within twenty-four hours.

"Yes," Mannering continued, "I believe he'll do it. And it's a capital idea of yours, capital."

Trent appreciated the compliment at its full value—and more. Mannering was not ordinarily very cordial toward him; his egotism received the sop with gluttonous joy. He was beaming as he stood up to say good night. He had forgotten his suspicions.

At that moment, his eyes fell on the table that stood in the middle of the room. A sickening wave of amazement swept over him. For there, in full sight, shamelessly brazen, lay a cluster of white roses—he could have sworn to them—his wife's.

Trent left the house blindly—he could never afterward remember what he said, or the order of his going. His whole emotion was one of despair amid the ruins of his pride. She, his wife, had been there, in that very room, had just left it, might still be in hiding within sound of his voice. It did not matter; wherever she might be, the past was irrevocable. His honor was foully, hopelessly stained by her, his wife. He went away courteously, but despair gripped him. His pride was seared—he to be the mock of his fellows, the cuckold of a faithless wife!

V

STILL the possessor of that delicate courtesy which gilded him, Trent knocked at his wife's door, and awaited her permission before entering.

In this time of upheaval, he still retained the details of politeness, and thereby demonstrated its entire worthlessness when based on egotism rather than on altruism. For his first words were venomous:

"Why do you return to my house, madame?"

His wife only stared at him in undisguised amazement, whereat Trent's indignation broke forth.

"I was at the Harneds'—after you left," with evident sarcasm.

"Well?"

Her restraint angered him almost beyond endurance. It is sometimes difficult to reconcile the emotions of

an injured husband to the exigencies of the pink of politeness. However, Trent held himself within those bounds of patience required by perfect manners, and only permitted that candor which was necessary.

"I understand the reason of your delay in returning home. I know all."

"Oh, James told you. I hope the horse is not seriously hurt?"

"The horse!"

"I thought you said you knew. One of the horses fell. I came home in a hansom."

"And Mannering?"

"Yes, he was just behind. He gave me his hansom."

Mr. Trent was in a wild rage now. The story of the accident might be true, but that did not matter. Perhaps it had only chanced to offer the opportunity she craved. But since he knew her perfidy, this air of insolent disdain maddened him.

"Where are your flowers?" he cried, roughly.

"My flowers!"

She could not speak another word. There was a long silence. The man was gasping for words. At last—

"Leave my house within twenty-four hours."

"What! You mean—?" Her air of indignation was superb. "You—you—believe—?"

"Oh, I saw your flowers in Mannering's chambers—where you left them!" the husband sneered. "You will leave my house within twenty-four hours—I do not care for repentance."

And he went out of the room.

His wife stood staring. Then she shuddered. It was so fearful to her, a woman, to be so foully accused. She stood long in an anguish of shame. And then at last the injustice of the accusation rose like a giant to overthrow all her scruples.

"I thought it would not be fair to him," she murmured. "And now—fair to him!"

Her eyes fell on the red roses that were in a vase on her dressing-table—red roses that whispered softly of love

and delight, red roses that he, her husband, had given her—and their message was a siren song that wooed her thoughts from duty toward a dream of bliss.

"I shall not be later than a quarter

of eleven," she said, aloud, and very earnestly.

This story is not in extenuation of erring wives—only a warning to erring husbands.



BRER ADAM

OH, I'se sorry fo' Brer Adam,
I'se as sorry as kin be,
Kase he neber had no mammy
Fo' toe rock him on her knee.

Den he neber had no chilehood
Roun' de happy cabin do',
Wif his mammy dere toe cotch him
Ef he tumbled toe de flo'.

An' he neber knowed de feelin'
When de sun had sunk toe res',
An' de possum an' de hoe-cake
He had tucked beneaf his ves'.

Jes' toe snuggle up toe mammy
While de shaky embers glowed,
An' she sof'ly tried toe p'int him
Up de straight an' narrer road.

Oh, it mus' be mighty sudden
Jes' toe staht a growed-up man,
Wif no t'ings toe reccolmember
Dat would len' a helpin' han'!

An' I sometimes git toe t'inkin'
He'd 'a' let dat apple be,
Ef he'd eber had a mammy
Fo' toe rock him on her knee.

ELAINE McLANDBURGH WILSON.



A VERDICT POSTPONED

PAYNE—Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you what you are.

LANE—I'll tell you some other time; I had pork for dinner to-day.

ARCHERY

WITH golf become a weary round,
 Our caddies out on strike,
 And tennis—after golfing—found
 Too tame and dull to like,
 We let the links to dairymen,
 Played in our courts a last time,
 And took up archery again
 As the one perfect pastime.

Its scoffers will at least admit
 'Tis not an aimless game!
 (I think I hear some huntsman wit)
 Retort with "gameless aim!")
 But, anyhow, *we* had an end
 In view—and I bet Sophy
 A man, and not a maid, would bend
 The bow that won the trophy.

She took me up—and lost. I, too!
 But somehow didn't mind.
 An honorary member who
 (Tradition says) is blind,
 With mighty skill made needless quite
 All rivalry between us—
 'Twas that renowned toxophilite,
 D. Cupid, son of Venus.

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



IT WOULD ANSWER

ROSE—I painted this picture to keep the wolf from the door.
 FLEMING—If the wolf is anything of an art critic it will do it.



JUST THE SAME

COBWIGGER—Do you keep up your college studies during vacation time?
 VAN SPRINTER—Oh, yes; four hours' track and road work every day.

TOUJOURS DEMOISELLE

Par Charles Foley

C'ÉTAIT un soir d'été, à Lucerne, après une représentation de *Paul et Virginie*. Violette Merval venait d'être acclamée pour sa beauté, sa grâce et sa voix délicieuse. Je connaissais la cantatrice. Aussi l'attendis-je à la sortie du théâtre afin de lui exprimer mon admiration.

Sous les arbres de la promenade, devant le lac où la lune, aux frissons de l'onde, se reflétait en brisures d'argent Violette m'apparut encore toute mignonne et jolie dans l'envolée de ses mousselines vaporeuses et de ses soies légères. Cependant un peu de pâleur et de mélancolie lui prêtait cette sorte de charme attendrissant qu'ont les femmes et les fleurs fanées avant l'automne pour s'être épanouies en trop vive lumière. Mais ses yeux demeuraient d'un bleu profond de candeur, d'espoir et d'illusion. Elle me prit le bras et, sortant du groupe des artistes qui l'entouraient, elle m'entraîna jusqu'au lac. Là, coupant court aux compliments, elle murmura dans son sourire exquis :

— Ainsi, vous me trouvez toujours jeune, ingénue, virginale... Croiriez-vous, cependant, que je vais avoir trente ans !

— Est-ce possible ?

Le sourire s'atténua en petite moue de regret :

— Hé oui ! Voici douze ans que je suis jeune, ingénue, virginale... Aussi bien à la ville qu'au théâtre ! Car vous n'ignorez pas que Violette Merval est toujours une demoiselle parfaitement comme il faut, une vraie petite vertu ?

La question m'embarrassait. J'y répondis sottement :

— Etant donnés la familiarité et l'intimité forcées des répétitions, la camaraderie obligatoire en tournée, puis aussi la griserie des ovations, l'emballement des rôles de passion d'abord feinte puis sincère, rien n'est plus méritoire que d'être restée honnête dans une telle existence et dans un tel milieu !

— Aussi suis-je estimée et respectée, fit-elle. Ce n'est pas désagréable. Mais je me demande parfois s'il ne serait pas encore plus agréable d'être aimée.

— Hé ! mais... les occasions n'ont pas dû vous manquer ! Si vous êtes restée une *petite vertu*, selon votre expression, ce ne peut guère être que par orgueil ou par dédain.

— Eh bien ! non, fit-elle vivement et naïvement ; je vous assure, si étonnant que ce soit, qu'il n'y a pas de ma faute ! J'avais la vocation du mariage, j'adorais les enfants. Seulement ma vie ne s'est pas orientée de ce côté-là. Tenez ! nous avons le temps, je ne me sens pas lasse et la nuit est de sérénité féerique : tout en nous promenant, voulez-vous que je vous conte ma vie ?

J'acceptai volontiers. Et, le groupe des artistes nous suivant toujours à distance, Violette, que le clair de lune sans doute invitait aux confidences, commença d'une voix douce et voilée :

— Orpheline, je fus élevée par une tante très pauvre. J'avais déjà la mine innocente et la voix jolie. "Quelle ravissante petite ingénue cela ferait !" disait-on à ma tante. Et ma tante le crut. Cette phrase-là décida de mon destin. L'excellente femme liquida sa modeste pension pour m'habiller coquettement et me payer des leçons de maintien, de danse, de chant et de diction. Je la

suppliai vainement de m'élever modestement, économiquement; elle ne voulut rien entendre: "Laisse-moi faire. Je veux mettre tes talents en lumière. Qu'importe que je m'y ruine! Quand tu seras une Adelina Patti, tu me revaudras ma dépense au centuple!" C'était une idée fixe. En désespoir de cause, estimant que ce serait lui voler son argent que de trahir ses espoirs, je travaillai tant que je pus. Sous l'égide de ma bonne parente, j'entrai au Conservatoire à seize ans et j'en sortis, deux ans après, avec un premier prix de chant. On y eût pu joindre un prix de sagesse. Je fus engagée au Théâtre-Lyrique. Ce n'était pas la fortune, mais l'aisance. Ma tante, qui croyait aux prédictions de l'avenir, se fit tirer les cartes. On lui certifia, pour moi, la plus brillante fortune tant que je conserverais ma voix et, pour conserver ma voix, la cartomancienne préconisait l'austère célibat: "La moindre amourette, le plus prudent mariage, et c'en est fait de son trille. Veillez-y!" Ma tante y veilla scrupuleusement. De fait, je débutai dans le rôle de *Virginie*. Mon adresse en scène, mon air chaste, ma voix de cristal, firent merveille. Le directeur encaissa de grosses recettes et le bruit courut bientôt que ma vertu portait chance. J'étais le fétiche, le talisman, la mascotte! On est très superstitieux dans le monde des théâtres. Personne ne me parla d'amour et, s'y fût-on risqué, ma tante était toujours là pour répondre. Je suivais ses conseils avec gratitude, avec docilité... et continuais de chanter *Virginie*. Il se trouva, parmi les ténors qui jouèrent avec moi, un brave garçon qui, moins superstitieux que les autres, osa me faire la cour. J'y fus sensible. Nous nous fiançâmes en secret, entre deux répliques, et, ma pauvre tante étant morte cette même année, nous voulûmes nous marier. Le directeur eut vent de nos intentions. Imbu des préjugés de ma tante, il me proposa une grande tournée en Amérique. Je n'étais pas trop riche, car je dépensais beaucoup pour mes costumes et mes bijoux. J'acceptai et signai ce qu'il voulut, mais je n'appris que la veille du départ que

mon fiancé n'était pas du voyage. Vous imaginez mon chagrin. Par bonheur, ce chagrin n'altéra pas ma voix et, tous les artistes qui m'entouraient partageant la superstition du directeur, mon trille n'eut rien à craindre. Cette tournée, où naturellement je chantai *Virginie*, fut un triomphe, et nous gagnâmes beaucoup d'argent. Seulement, au retour, mon ténor se trouva marié. Autour de mon succès, cependant, la légende prenait plus de consistance. Je passais pour le porte-bonheur de la troupe et tout le monde croyait de bonne foi que tout nous réussirait tant qu'aucun Siegfried ne viendrait troubler le pudique sommeil de la Valkyrie!

Je me pris à sourire. Violette sourit aussi, puis ajouta:

— Cela vous paraît étrange... c'est pourtant la pure vérité. Tout le personnel du théâtre, fanatisé par la peur de voir baisser la recette, m'idolâtre... mais me surveille jalousement, et cela, depuis le directeur et le régisseur jusqu'au dernier des contrôleurs, en passant par les machinistes, les ouvreuses et le pompier de service! Ah! depuis douze ans, ce que je les ai chantées, les *Virginies*!

— Cependant, objectai-je, vous avez dû rencontrer des admirateurs autres que des ténors, des barytons, des basses ou des barnums superstitieux. Toute votre vie ne se passe pas au théâtre...

— Mais si... à peu près toute! Répétitions dans la journée, représentations le soir. Je me lève tard. Il reste, quoi qu'on en pense, bien peu de place aux hasards. Et puis, soupira-t-elle mollement, à la fin, la superstition m'a gagnée, moi aussi: je commence à croire à l'efficacité de ma sagesse. De plus, les amourettes et les mariages que je vois autour de moi ne sont guère encourageants... si bien que je crois qu'à présent, l'occasion se présentant, je serai sceptique et manquerai de conviction pour la saisir aux cheveux... si elle en a! Chanceuse dans la vertu, j'aurais trop peur de ne trouver que la *guigne* en amour. Et pourtant, ah! pourtant, je sens bien parfois, comme

dit la chanson, que mon pauvre cœur n'a pas ce qu'il désire!

Je risquai la question difficile:

— Avez-vous essayé?...

Elle hésita, rougit, puis, résolue à la franchise, avoua:

— Eh bien! oui... j'ai essayé. Pas plus tard que l'an dernier, j'exigeai un congé et, désespérant d'être réellement aimée dans cette existence fiévreuse et factice de coulisses, je suis partie: toute seule, *incognito*, non pas vers des plages à casino ou des villégiatures en vogue, mais à la vraie campagne, dans un petit village perdu en plein bocage. Je me suis mise en pension dans une ferme isolée, sous bois, au bord d'une sinieuse et limpide rivière, où je flânais en barque tout le jour et prenais chaque soir un bain délicieux. C'est là que j'attendis l'aventure rêvée.

— Eh bien...?

— Elle faillit se produire. En canotant, je découvris, près de la ferme, au bord de la rivière, un cottage enfoui sous les roses et le jasmin. Dans le jardin en terrasse, j'apercevais de loin un vieux monsieur qui se promenait à petits pas, lentement, au bras d'un grand beau jeune homme blond. Je ramai souvent de ce côté-là, l'imagination frappée et le cœur ému de l'attitude mutuellement affectueuse et dévouée de ce fils et de ce père si étroitement unis! Je me pris à rêver un honnête bonheur dans cette maisonnette, sous ces ombrages paisibles, entre ce digne vieillard et ce beau grand jeune homme. Bon fils, celui-ci ne ferait-il pas un excellent mari? Oui, mais comment faire sa connaissance ou seulement fixer son attention? Je désespérais quand l'occasion souhaitée s'offrit d'elle-même. Vers la fin d'une journée très chaude, je flânais, selon ma coutume, en barque, sur la rivière. Simplement vêtue, d'un peignoir de laine blanche endossé par-dessus mon costume de bain, je cherchais un endroit bien à l'ombre pour faire ma pleine eau. L'ayant trouvé non loin du cottage, j'amarrai mon bateau et m'élançai dans l'onde. A la troisième brasse, surprise et charmée, j'aperçus sous un saule, assis sur le talus gazonné

de la rive, mon beau jeune homme blond. Il était seul! Cette coïncidence romanesque m'exalta. Dans un subit instinct de coquetterie, je me pris à mimer gracieusement mon rôle de sirène: on n'est pas comédienne pour rien! Tout en nageant, je dénouai mes cheveux d'or sur mes épaules de neige, je jouai la nymphe des eaux s'ébattant librement.

— Et le jeune homme?

— Immobile et muet, il fixait sur moi ses grands beaux yeux tout embrumés de rêve: il se croyait sans doute le jouet d'un enchantement devant cette prestigieuse apparition de fée des eaux; je le devinais sans souffler, fasciné, hypnotisé d'admiration... et, dame! enivrée, enhardie du succès de ma séduction, je me rapprochais de la rive pour prendre pied et rendre le premier entretien plus facile, quand, tout à coup, je vis le père du jeune homme accourir tout inquiet vers la berge. Extrêmement contrariée, je n'eus que le temps de feindre l'affarouchement d'une Diane surprise au bain et de pousser un joli petit cri de pudique frayeur. Ce ne fut pas le jeune homme, ce fut le vieillard qui s'excusa:

— Oh! pardon de vous avoir fait peur, mademoiselle; vous me voyez désolé de troubler vos gracieux ébats; mais mon fils était seul depuis quelques moments et, au bruit de l'eau remuée, j'ai eu très peur pour lui...

Cette peur du papa me parut ridicule, et agacée que ce grand benêt, toujours immobile et muet, ne manifestât rien de ses impressions, je reculai, affectant de gémir d'une voix plus confuse, plus désolée:

— Oh! monsieur! si j'avais pu me douter qu'on me regardait!

Et le papa, touché, m'avoua très bienveillant:

— Il n'y a pas grand mal, mademoiselle; je suis, moi, un très vieil homme... et mon fils est aveugle de naissance!

Ici, je ne pus me tenir de rire, et Violette, riant aussi de toutes ses petites dents blanches, acheva:

— Pour une fois que je me mettais en tels frais de séduction, convenez que,

tomber sur un aveugle, c'était vraiment la *guigne*! Cela m'a tellement dépitée que, depuis, je me tiens coite. J'ai repris le théâtre; j'y ai ramené la recette... et ma vertu.

Le groupe des artistes, inquiet de notre longue causerie, se rapprochant, elle me donna congé dans une poignée de main.

— Je ne veux pas abuser de la pa-

tience de mes bons chaperons. Allons, au revoir! fit-elle dans son exquis sourire. Quoi que j'aie pu vous dire, ne me plaignez pas trop, car la vertu, même dans notre métier, ce n'est pas plus dur qu'autre chose... et puis, voyez-vous, maintenant que je suis faite au rôle, ça, me manquerait trop de ne plus chanter les *Virginies*!



PRISCILLA'S PURSE

PRISCILLA'S purse was built to hold
 Much more than common yellow gold.
 Its daintiness can far surpass
 The purse of any other lass.

And yet, withal, I hate to see
 Priscilla's purse when she's with me,
 Because it tokens woes and quips;
 You see, it rests upon her lips—
 Priscilla's purse.

REYNALD SMITH PICKERING.



HIS SERVICE

REEDER—From Colonel Sblud's stories it would seem that he was quite an important figure in the war, and yet I cannot recall having seen his name mentioned in any of the histories.

SPORTY—No, I reckon he was just one of the "also rans."



THE BEST OF REASONS

"LOOK here, sir, you've always paid me before."
 "But before, I never owed you enough to make it an object."

UNDER MY THUMB

By Hillhouse Cromwell

“O H, drop it, drop it, drop it, Miss Violet,” he said. “There’s no use arguing this question. The earth is still man’s, and the fullness thereof—including woman. A woman has no more chance to take possession of the simple and daily privileges which are labeled ‘masculine’ than she ever had. They seem to be just lying about loose; and they don’t appear to be of great value or importance, anyhow. But they’ve got the brand on ‘em, ‘masculine’—every one—duly authenticated and registered; and just let some ill-advised woman try annexing one of ‘em, and see if she isn’t a great deal worse than lynched.”

I looked resentfully down the long table—Marjorie always had such crowds at her dinners. There she sat, fat and contented, at one end of the board; and Bob, fat and contented, at the other. The dinner was perfect, and I was spoiling it for myself by being vexed at Major Jarvis. But was I vexed at what he said, or at something within me which answered him?

“Come, now,” his voice went on, teasingly, “let’s put the case. Suppose yourself to be alone in any large city which you know well, but in which you are not well known; would you dare to walk out upon its streets and accept cheerfully the first chance-met diversion which offered itself to you? I talk to any respectable-looking individual who talks to me. And, gad, I learn a lot that way, and am often vastly amused; thieves, bunco-men, ladies with disabled reputations

—or none—all, I am proud to say, have contributed incidentally to my education in life. Isn’t it true that if a woman spoke to you, you would think her *déclassée*, or that she wanted to pick your pocket?”

“It is true,” I answered, “or it has been; but it shall be true no more. If my mental lungs would get a freer breath were I to open the doors of civil kindness to strangers—why, I should do it, that’s all.”

Again Major Jarvis laughed, his low-toned, well-bred laugh.

“Listen, people,” he said; and although he scarcely raised his voice, almost the entire table turned to harken. “Here is a young rebel, who proposes to have the masculine rights while retaining the feminine privileges. Miss Violet Hetherington, ladies and gentlemen, proposes, the next time she has an opportunity, to swagger down the streets of whatever city she may chance to be in unchaperoned, with her metaphorical hands in her figurative pockets——”

“Women have no other kind—their pockets are all figurative!” cried a gay voice, whose owner I could not see.

“Well, then, she proposes as near as I can make it out to paint the town, if not red, at least of a marked rosy hue. Look your last upon the damsel. You will have to drop her acquaintance shortly, I’m thinking.”

“Tut, tut!” murmured Leigh King, with that ridiculous solemn cluck of his; “tut, tut! shame——”

“Too bad, too bad!” agreed Hardsley; “pretty girl Vi was. But, don’t

you know, I always somehow mis-doubted, don't you know, sort of half expected——"

"Yes—um—er—that's right, old man, I know. A sort of—ah!" And they winked and guffawed.

Marjorie made her plaintive protest heard, as this din abated.

"It's absurd, Violet. You're much too pretty. That's one of the compensations in being downright ugly—one can tear around and have such a lot of fun. But, goodness! a pretty woman—not to mention such a howling beauty as Vi—daren't manifest a disposition to be emancipated."

"In short, Miss Violet," summed up Bourke Hassan, from across the table, "handsome women are the goods that belong to the masculine half of creation, and we've made laws to hold a tight rein on them. If there were such a thing as an ugly woman—which I don't believe at all"—and he rolled his sleepy blue eyes down at Marjorie, with an exaggerated air of adoration, which is one of his regular performances—"I say, if there *were* any ugly women, we'd let them frisk around a bit; but seeing that this is a man's world, we've made it absolutely necessary for a pretty woman to behave herself."

"Behave!" I repeated, in deep scorn. "What an absurd word! As if anybody had said anything about behaving! The only point Major Jarvis and I were discussing was that men conducted themselves like human beings, and he says that women conduct themselves like women. My sole and modest announcement was that henceforth I was going to conduct myself like a human being. When a thing interests me, I shall say so. When I want to go somewhere——"

"Er, 'somewhere'—that is anywhere, eh?" interjected Major Jarvis.

"Yes, anywhere," I answered, sharply, "I shall go. When I want to speak to an individual, I shall speak to him—or her, or it—without a prefatory week of prayer—without an introduction, if I like."

"No," chimed in Marjorie, "you'll

take your week of prayer afterward—that's more like the usual thing."

Marjorie is my sister-in-law. If you have not a sister-in-law, pray do not invest in one upon my recommendation; I have never been known to hold that they added in the least to one's comfort.

"I don't want to do anything really dreadful," I announced.

"How disappointing!" murmured Major Jarvis, at my ear.

I gave him a withering look, at which he pretended to shiver, and really laughed.

"Now you're simply maudlin," Kathleen Hoffman pronounced. "You were somewhat interesting in the other phase; one fancied there might be developments along that line; but a female who desires to burst her fetters with a loud report and fierce outcry, and rush madly to a Christian Endeavor meeting, is—well——"

"Women always paw the air like that," Bob interrupted, with brotherly freedom. "Nobody needs to be much scared when they pass you out such a programme. Keep 'em talking, and they'll generally work it off that way."

"Women are words—men are deeds," commented a widow upon Bourke Hassan's left. She had dusky blond hair, like dirty gold, and long, green eyes. Men called her handsome. I felt that I hated her, as she spoke, in her lazy drawl, which grudged you the syllables.

My lips parted to say, "Very well. I'll be words no more. I'll be deeds."

The long, green eyes dwelt an illuminating moment on my flushed face. A spark seemed to leap from their cool depths and light my path. Here was one woman who said little and did as she pleased. To such, this personal discussion of one's actions appeared childish. Such a one felt no need to threaten and bluster. I was silenced. My lips closed, and straightened themselves into a grim line of resolution which made the green eyes sparkle and dance with unexpressed mirth.

I looked up and down the table—

I sat about midway. Here were my own people, the units of the human family among which I had been bred. Major Jarvis gave me my first set of corals, and twenty years later presented the largest bouquet among my debutante's spoils. Bourke Hassan I had flirted with since we were both in short frocks at the same kindergarten. Bob was my brother, and brothers must be pitied and endured, even though one may not feel warmly moved to embrace them. As for the women, I never liked anything Marjorie did; Kathleen Hoffman and I had quarreled fiercely, not six months ago, over golf; the widow I had always distrusted; yet, at the touchstone of this discussion, a line of fire, so it seemed to me, ran between the masculine and feminine diners, dividing them into sheep and goats.

The men—I raged at them as I noted it—looked secure, considering, patronizing. There they were, in their monstrous evening dress, with their shorn heads, pretending to admire and waiting to be adored. The women—my eyes softened as they rested upon my sister slaves, decked, constricted, displayed; affecting to rule, and watching abjectly to see if they would be accepted.

"Bob," I said, sourly, "if you knew one half as much about women as you think you do about autos, you wouldn't talk so much."

"There's no use getting in a rage and tearing up the ground like that," Bob resumed. (Brothers are such a nuisance. They know so much and such inconvenient things about one.) "It isn't the wicked things men—or women—do, that make society pitch them out, neck and crop. We talk about morality; the morality of the social world is all in the eleventh commandment, the one about being found out. The unforgivable sin, socially speaking, is defiance. Now, for instance, you girls can smoke all the cigarettes you want to around the table here. Most of the women I know smoke more or less. If one of you put a cigarette in her mouth and trotted down the

Avenue smoking to-morrow morning, the rest of you wouldn't speak to her to-morrow night. Isn't that so?"

"Good gracious, Robert, you're exactly right!" Kathleen Hoffman cried. "You'd better do something for him, Marjorie. Tie up his head in pounded ice, or something. He doesn't often have an idea like that, does he? If he gets to fulminating original gospels of this sort frequently, he'll do himself mischief."

"It's a funny thing," pursued Bourke Hassan, reflectively, "that if you only hit Mrs. Grundy hard enough, she'll cotton to it. Robert says truly that if you walked down the Avenue, once, smoking, you'd be a scandal. But I say that if you made a practice of it—and did no worse—you'd cease to be a scandal; the novelty would wear off. More, when people who came from other places saw you promenading and smoking for the first time, and professed themselves shocked, the local gossips would take up the cudgels for you. They would come to have a sort of civic pride in you as an institution different from that possessed by other towns. George Sand was doing more than burn tobacco when she strode up and down the foyer between acts smoking a big, black cigar; she was conquering for herself the position of a chartered libertine."

"But the feeling of sex is sacred to humanity," said Hetherington. "Who's that chap in Barrie's 'Sentimental Tommy'?—Latta, the weaver, you know. Do you remember his saying, because he'd played the coward before the girl who loved him, that he had 'violated the feeling of sex'? That's it; women expect certain things of men—courage, audacity, a reasonable amount of coarseness, a hardihood in meeting the exigencies of life. They even expect certain vices—yes, by George! and miss 'em if they're not there. Men expect certain things of a woman—to be as dainty about her associates as a cat crossing a muddy street; to draw back and stare at a stranger who addresses her; to be utterly without initiative; to want—to

want—well, to want her life cooked for herself, as one might say.”

There was a chorus of laughing assent from the men. “You’ve hit it, Robert; with your usual acumen, you have hit the nail squarely on the head.”

And Bourke Hassan added: “We men eat life raw. It has to be cooked for women. So the thing has been since time was, since men and women were. So it will be to the end, pretty rebels to the contrary, notwithstanding,” bowing with mock gravity toward me.

“Very well,” I said, as I rose; “my life may have to be cooked—some things are nasty raw—but that’s not saying that I won’t *taste* it raw. And, anyhow, it won’t be cooked according to your recipe.” Then, including them all in one flaming glance, I sailed out.

II

Now, as Major Jarvis had phrased it, I was myself “up against the proposition.” In New York to see about the publication of a novel, determined not to pose as a scribbling society woman, I had notified no friends of my intention to be there. The only person who knew I was in town was a Mr. Hardwicke, literary editor of *The Planet*, who had encouraged me with the idea that his paper might run my story serially.

For three years I had conducted a more or less close correspondence with him in shorthand. My novel was full of actual facts and real personages. It was more nearly a reporter’s account of certain things with which I was familiar than a piece of fiction. Yet I had taken much joy in doing something other than attempt to dress better than the women of my circle, and drift from one social function to another.

“Alone in a city which I knew well, and where I was practically unknown!” I interrogated my face in the dressing-glass. “Life, my young friend,” I asked, “will you take it cooked—or raw?” She looked back at me, the

girl in the glass, with eyes like stars; her lips formed themselves into innocent smiles—you would not have guessed for a moment that the minx was counseling me to the unpardonable sin of defiance. As I passed out, the smoking and chatting men in the rotunda and office regarded me with a curiosity which was not that friendly, indifferent curiosity they showed their fellow-men.

Was it, after all, any use trying to be wiser than the race-thought of centuries? I turned and hurried down to the ladies’ entrance.

As I hesitated upon the curb, a handsome private coupé drew up before me. The driver, stooping down, said in a low tone: “I am glad to find you, madam; your husband has sent me for you.”

Was the adventure, for which I had declared myself eager, presenting itself to me? I turned to the cabman and answered, promptly: “You are mistaken in the person, I think. I am not——”

“Not married!” he finished, instantly and eagerly. “Oh, then you are the other lady—the young lady.”

I was tasting it raw—and the flavor surprised, yet pleased, my untried palate, the fumes flew to my head. I glanced down the street, looking, I do believe, for the mosque towers and minarets of Bagdad, to hear the camel-driver’s note, or the water-carrier’s droning cry as he passed the corner. No, there were a half-dozen automobiles hurrying by. The hotel was behind me. Across Madison Square, the Diana twinkled with light, and aimed forever at an unseen quarry. I was merely in New York.

For the information of my sisters who have not stricken off the shackles, I will say that it is the first plunge which daunts. A woman is a coward because she thinks she is a coward. I jumped into the coupé, the door slammed, and we drove away northward. Far up-town, I was delivered into the hands of a discreet maid, in the hallway of a magnificent detached mansion. The woman told me that I

was expected, and suggested that I would wish to make some changes in my toilette, since there were guests to meet me, displaying to my astonished eyes a number of handsome costumes, from which I selected.

On entering the drawing-room, I found myself in the midst of what appeared to be a woman's evening reception.

My hostess, who seemed to be of middle age, superbly gowned, regarded me with a close scrutiny, beneath which I read a painful anxiety that I should be that—whatever it was—for which she looked, of which she felt herself to stand in desperate need. She called me Violet, without prefix, and apparently with the design of giving the impression that I was an old friend. The women in the room to whom she presented me were all as handsomely gowned as myself. They were not talking to one another to any extent, and there was an air of uneasiness in the room. Then I observed, with the relief of one who guesses a puzzling conundrum, that there were twelve guests present beside myself. I had evidently been bidden in this curious fashion to prevent the fatal thirteen at table. The next moment the curtains of an alcove parted, and a young girl who had been lingering there, joined us, just as the butler in the archway announced, "Madame, supper is served."

The table was round, the lace upon it strange to me—a recondite Russian with dull Eastern shades in its mesh. Repeating these dusk tints were purple and pink orchids, piled lavishly in a great bowl of lustrous beaten silver. A wonderful samovar, a curious cheese course served with individual scoops or spoons of dull silver crusted with turquoises, and a chafing-dish with birds in wine, which proved to be an odd dragon-foot affair of Chinese bronze, gave a charming flavor of Russia and the Orient to the table fittings.

My first glance showed me a curious and suggestive fact; the women at the table were all unusually beautiful and young. I realized—though the type

of beauty varied widely—a something common to all. I imagined that this might be a family resemblance, and the function, after all, a family supper party. But as I studied them, I found what I had taken for a family resemblance to be a hardihood, a look half-defiant, half-furtive, which showed itself at some unguarded moment upon each of these young and beautiful countenances.

It seems absurd now, but the knowledge came upon me with a shock that they were all as utter strangers to one another, and to their surroundings, as I to them. If they had not been brought to the house in exactly the same way I had, their costumes had been similarly provided. The woman across from me had made a terrific choice in frocks; a dark beauty, she had dragged the stiff folds of a rich brocade, which would have been becoming to a slender, gray-haired woman, around her plump form and naively fastened them with—stick pins! There was a lack of finish about the girl's full lips which promised just the vulgar, facile taste that counseled her, with her complexion, to wear red. She had taken the garniture of poppies from her frock, and wore them wreath-wise upon her head. She looked like a dismantled stage fairy.

My hostess continued to distinguish me, by showing me more attention than the others, and adroitly conveyed the impression that I was a near friend or relative. It seemed that my appearance, or my manner of meeting these strange circumstances, pleased her. And yet, "pleased" is not quite the word. She was like a woman playing a game, working out a problem; and I fancied that she was strained to the breaking point in urgent eagerness that my behavior and person should be the answer to her needs, the solution of her problem.

I found myself watching my handsome hostess's face, and seeking in my mind what she desired of me. Before our meal was over she told us a story—and told it well. In it a knight and lady were carried away in

a torrent. Finding lodgment on a rock in mid-stream, the lady dragged up the treasure bags they were carrying. It seemed that this would push the knight's hand away from its hold. In short, it became a question with the lady between her love and her wealth.

Heaven knows what the women about that table thought of themselves and the adventure upon which they now seemed embarked, what they had come from, what they would go back to, what long-kept rules they had broken to be there at all; but it is certain that every one of them was hypnotized. There they leaned, lips apart, eyes upon the speaker's face, countenances relaxed till you might have read in each the thought its owner was most anxious to conceal.

She put the question to each of her guests in turn—"What would you have done?" She let them see that it was a question between fine-spun sentiment and self-interest. Ophelia of the poppies, and many another, failed to answer her satisfactorily. Either they showed too much greed, too dangerous a rapacity, or they displayed vacillating minds. My turn found me frivolously intent upon giving just the polished, well-bred, heartless answer which would please her.

"I should have been sure my lover was a good swimmer," I drawled, "else, why venture into torrents with me? I should have said to him, 'Swim for your life, sir; I will take care of your wife and your wealth.'"

This answer suited so well that, to use a homely phrase, it broke up the meeting. I stood beside my hostess while she bowed the others out, detaining me with the same fiction that I was a relative. The maid followed each guest to her carriage with a bundle which I conceived to contain the clothes in which they had arrived.

III

As the last guest left us, I gazed after her in sudden terror of the sit-

uation. The moment we were alone, my hostess's poise faltered. I saw that her forces were nearly exhausted, that they needed to be rallied, flogged to the pace, since the culmination of whatever she had planned was just in view.

She turned to me. "Don't ask questions," she almost panted, as I drew away and opened my lips. "You were brought here for a purpose."

"What is it?" I cried, recoiling. "What do you want of me?"

She clutched my wrist till she hurt me. She put her face close to mine, and fairly gasped out, "There is a dying man in the next room, whom you——"

"I will have nothing to do with it," I protested. "Why, good heaven! what—what a— Let me go—let me go at once! We have had enough of this unconscionable fooling. Let me go! I tell you I will not——"

"No, no!" She clung to my wrist, her eyes burning in her white face. "You are the one—beautiful—and reckless, but not coarse—a lady. He would trust and receive you."

"Who would trust and receive me?" I inquired, incautiously. "What under heaven do you mean?"

"You must marry—no, hear me out—at least, hear what I have to say!" For I had drawn violently back in fear and repugnance.

She calmed her voice and manner, and addressed me quietly, even mildly. "Listen, dear girl," she said, "you are in the De Armond place. I am Mrs. De Armond. It is my son who——" Her breath failed her; she nodded with tightly-pressed lips toward the door which I had refused to pass.

Something in my heart failed, too, with that failing breath of hers. The De Armond place! Mrs. De Armond! I was under the roof with Wallace De Armond! For a few moments this thought burned out every other from my mind.

I do not remember when I first heard of Wallace De Armond, son of that Wallace De Armond who made

the enormous fortune in the protected pearl fisheries of the South Seas. Heir to a vast fortune, this young fellow had been born and bred abroad. Europe, Australia, India and China—he had traveled, studied and dreamed through them all. Fifteen years after the death of his father, the young man came to New York, where he at once became a marked and interesting figure. His charities, his intellectual attainments, his great personal beauty became topics of as unfailing interest to newspaper gossip as his enormous wealth.

Mrs. De Armond watched my face. "Under the terms of his father's will, he comes of age to-night—his twenty-fifth birthday. And all his wealth will be his absolutely, if he is married before twelve o'clock. If he is not—if he remains unmarried—the money goes to another branch of the family—a cousin."

I remembered, with a sudden pain at my heart, the picture of Wallace De Armond, handsome and winning as a young Lohengrin or Launcelot, which stood now upon my dressing-table at home—and he was dying.

"He must be married," she urged. "Why do you hesitate? I tell you the truth when I tell you that he is a dying man. He doesn't know it, but he can live only a few weeks more. The fortune is immense. Money—money, my dear girl; after all, money is the thing in this world. The position of a widow is—is an enviable one."

A sense of something seriously wrong grew upon me, and with it the conviction came that I might be of value to Wallace De Armond by going forward with the matter, at least, so far as to see him. By agreeing with Mrs. De Armond, I might find whether help were needed, and, if it were, offer it.

I hardened my resolution and my voice, and answered as I fancied she wished.

"Spoken like a sensible girl—thank heaven for it! Come, you shall see him. We will get that over. I am sure he cannot fail to be pleased with

you." She turned and searched my face again. "You will try to please him?" she asked. "You will make every effort? I assure you I have proposed plans to him—oh, plans! But here are you, a reality and a very charming one. You must please him—it is beyond reason that you shouldn't—and you and I will remain the best of friends. It is so, is it not?"

Speech seemed beyond me, but I managed to nod earnestly.

"Just so," she murmured, and drew me with her into an adjoining room, the door of which she unlocked.

I braced myself for sight of a sick-room with its couch, its white-capped nurses, its little stand with an array of bottles. Instead, I saw coming toward us down the empty, brilliantly-lighted apartment which we now entered, a young man in evening dress, in the flower of his manhood, and apparently in perfect health.

"This is my son," Mrs. De Armond said. Then, drawing me forward, she added, in explanation to him, "Here she is."

It was indeed Wallace De Armond, the original of the picture which had been daily familiar to my eyes for more than a year. He turned aside, with a gesture of dismissal; then, catching my eye, looked eagerly into my face. At last he moved impulsively toward me, with both hands outstretched to clasp mine. Glancing toward his step-mother, "Who is this?" he asked. "Does she know? Have you told her?"

Mrs. De Armond nodded. "I have told her all that she needs to know," she answered. "You two will want to talk together." And she made as though to leave us alone.

In my distress and confusion, I turned to follow or detain her, only to be met by the closing door. With my hand upon the knob, and in as wild a tumult of mind and feeling as a girl could ever expect to experience, I spoke over my shoulder, crying: "I have agreed to nothing! I did not know when I came here that I——"

"Hush!" he interrupted, as he

gently lifted my hand from the knob; "I understand. Mrs. De Armond has enlisted your sympathies——"

"But, indeed, no—you are mistaken. I came into this matter—I came into this house—in the frivolous spirit. I accepted it as a jest—embarked upon it for mere amusement. I had no idea of encouraging realities, and such—such painful realities."

His eyes dilated with distress, and fixed themselves hungrily upon my face. "Painful realities," he repeated, under his breath. "I have been starved for any human sympathy. I dare say I am childishly credulous and—presuming. I am too quick to fancy that you care."

"Oh, I do care—I do," I answered, repentantly, and put both my hands in his.

Again that strange speech of his stepmother's presented itself before me; he was "a dying man!" How sinister it sounded, as I looked at him, in the full flush of health and young, virile beauty.

"I will do anything I can for you," I declared. "Tell me—your mother is mistaken, she has explained nothing to me. I am only bewildered and——"

A week ago I would have added "frightened." To-night I concluded with the word "uncertain."

Impulsively he drew me to a sofa, and seated himself beside me. "Mrs. De Armond"—I noticed that he did not call her mother, nor speak of her even as his stepmother—"is very much distressed because, if midnight sees me unmarried, I lose the entire estate. You know so much?" he said, gently. Then, after a pause, and with those charming eyes of his fixed full on my face, he added, "Not only do I lose it, but it goes to a cousin, entirely out of her hands and mine, leaving neither of us anything but an income—an annuity."

"I see," I replied, quietly; "she would be losing it as well."

A little flash went over his face. He breathed a short, relieved sigh; but he said nothing, at first; he simply sat looking thoughtfully down. "She

would be losing it as well," he repeated, finally. "My father was old-world in his feeling; his hope was to found a family. His will covered the case by bequest and injunction. If I were not married at twenty-five, then a life income was to be mine, my cousin to have the estate and carry on the name."

His voice dropped low. "You saw the door unlocked," he breathed. "You know I am a prisoner. You must guess, as I do, that what we say may be listened to—by that woman, or those in her employ. Now, Mrs. De Armond and I are both weary, worn out by a long series of battles, skirmishes and encounters, and finally by this long, bitter siege." His beautiful eyes swept the walls of the room. "I believe her to be mad—a dangerous maniac." His voice was scarce more than an articulate breath; his eyes were lowered; his attitude told nothing. "She has brooded over this matter till she has become insane. At first, it seemed to satisfy her if I could, by marrying some creature who could be bought off, or someone in the last stages of an illness, comply with the terms of the will and hold the estate for both of us. Do you wonder that I shrank from such unions when she put them before me?"

"But how could she?" I interrupted, wonderingly. "You are a man. How could she keep you here and dictate whom you shall marry?"

There it was again, the old distinction the race is always making. History is full of women forced to ghastly and uncongenial marriages, to feed a father's ambition, a brother's greed, or as a mere expression of tyrannical authority on the part of the males of her family. I myself knew of a dozen instances—even in modern life—where the bride's preferences had been so little consulted that the marriage might almost have been called a forced one. Yet, put a man as protagonist, and the performance seemed bizarre, incongruous, altogether incredible.

"She is done with that, I think," he returned as quietly. "She is no longer

planning that she and I should share the De Armond estate. Poor soul! Her madness takes the turn of getting rid of me. She told me, a month ago, the route which I was to travel out of her way."

"You will be murdered!" I breathed, staring at him with terrified eyes.

His own met mine gratefully. "Look down," he uttered softly; then, "Not quite so bad as that," he whispered, with just the ghost of a little laugh. "You know it is a peculiarity of insane people, as of drunken men, to think all the rest of the world affected as they are. Did she not say that I was insane, at least mentally unsound? Didn't she say that? Then what could she possibly have said, to leave you so white and distressed?" And he clasped both my hands, as he searched my face intently.

I shook my head. "No, no, not that!" I said. "She cast no doubt at all upon your sanity. She told me nothing but that you were—" I could not get out the word "dying," and compromised on—"coming of age tonight, and that you lost the money unless you were married before midnight."

Wallace hesitated an instant. "I think I ought to tell you," he began, "that I—you and I, if you are willing I should put it so—well, we are not in the hands of an irresponsible madwoman alone. Dr. Etheredge—the name is well known to you, isn't it, as that of a physician of the very highest standing?"

I nodded.

"Etheredge is a man of science," he continued, "but without heart or conscience. You know he is a specialist in diseases of the mind. He has a private asylum, which he calls a sanatorium. He knows, as well as you or I—oh, of course he knows very much better!—that Mrs. De Armond is mentally unbalanced, and that the criminal course in which he is abetting her will probably end, with her, in acute mania—violent, raving madness."

"Is he in the house, do you think?" I asked.

"No; he would not be here at such a

time. I guess his connection with the later phases of the campaign only because some of the plans have been so masterly. I feel sure of it, though. It is to his place I shall be sent if Mrs. De Armond can get me safely married to a wife with whom she might hope to treat for the estate—whom she could hope to bribe."

He slipped from the sofa beside me, and dropped lightly on one knee, where he could gaze more easily up into my face. "It will look well," he murmured, with what strove to be a smile, "if anyone is watching us—as no doubt some one is. . . . A man does not like to be pinched off at twenty-five," he went on, in the same quiet, even voice. "But I believe I would rather be put out of the way entirely than thrust, sane, into an asylum. I have fought this thing now, single-handed, for months, and I am almost ready to say that I am beaten. Her ingenuity is such—she is such a persuasive woman—she has so utterly sane a manner—no," he dropped his head and his glance as he said it, "no, there is no hope."

I appreciated to the full the delicacy which did not urge any hope which might have been in me. "I think there is a chance," I began, softly.

He looked up. I felt that the pallor of his countenance was reflected in my own. His face, raised appealingly, was like that of the knight struggling with the current, in Mrs. De Armond's story.

I realized now just why she had told that story, just what she thought my answer to it expressed. "Let him shift for himself," she had hoped I would say, and act upon it; she had hoped I might let him struggle out as best he could, leaving him to the merciless current of her greed and her power.

As Wallace watched me eagerly, I realized that here again was an open door—the door which our light dinner-table talk the week before at my brother Bob's had more than asserted no woman dare pass. As for men marrying women of whom they know little—whom they may barely have

met—to rescue them from trying situations—why, romance is full of such stories; the thing has been of fairly frequent occurrence in real life, beyond a doubt. Apparently, a man need know no more of a woman in some situation of peril or cruelty or hardship which appeals to his chivalrous nature, than that she is fair to look upon, and that he feels toward her the world-old attraction which he dignifies by the name of love, to make marriage with her a possibility, if he so desire. Well, I had said I would be a man. Here was the man's rôle offered me—here was the reversal of the usual situation. I came with strength. I came to save. Would I have that greater strength to dare the unconventional—to act the man's part?

The expression in Wallace's eyes pierced my heart. Dropping my hands on his shoulders, I whispered, "I will help, I came to help. God sent me, I think. I am ready to do whatever is necessary to save your life, for that is what I think is in danger."

The position was a cruel one.

"I suppose you know," he began, hastily, watching me with those soft, dark eyes I knew so well, and rushing at the issue like a high-strung woman, who seems almost brusque in her fever to end the discussion of a dreaded point, "I suppose you know that if we were to call Mrs. De Armond and say that we had agreed to—had agreed—to marry before midnight"—the red ran over his pale cheeks—"it would immensely simplify matters." And now the crimson ebbed, and left the handsome face very pale once more. "But, my dearest girl," and he looked at me apprehensively, "it would be a serious step for you. She has her man here, a magistrate, or something of the sort, and would demand that the ceremony actually take place at once."

As he bent to me, and solicitously searched my face, I drew his dear head toward me, reckless of the possibility of espionage, and kissed him with rapture. I don't wonder men feel like gods when they make love to women! I knew now why no man

I ever met had stirred my heart. It wasn't in me—it simply wasn't in me to thrill and blush and be happy because I pleased some one, because some one offered me love. But give me the man's part—or a tithe of it—let me be, even measurably, looked to, to lead, to help and sustain, to originate—and my fancy had free rein to centre itself upon the man who needed me.

"You angel," Wallace murmured, and his lips were upon my hair, my brow, my eyelids, and then my lips. "Dearest, this is a matter of life and death. We both know that. We will come out of it alive, I feel sure; but if you are frightened, if you regret, if anything in your soul counsels you against me, and my sinister affairs, draw back now. Don't break my heart by being sorry when it is too late."

I was tasting life raw, and I liked the flavor. I enjoyed the masculine position of deciding, offering, giving. I laid both hands in those of my future husband, and said, simply:

"I shall never turn back. We shall stand together for life or death."

It was the strangest wedding for Violet Hetherington that could be imagined. I had always said that I would not have a great display at my marriage, but this naked, legal form—this poor, shorn, almost squalid, civil rite—this mournful travesty of a wedding, before a casual justice of the peace with dubious linen and unclean finger-nails, with a footman and housemaid for guests, fear holding the door and nameless suspicion squatting, as it were, in every shadowed corner—this passed my wildest imaginings!

When it was over and the three of us alone together, I made an attempt which Wallace and I had agreed upon—asking to be allowed to send for my wardrobe, or go for it.

Mrs. De Armond countered with an offer that her maid should fetch my things, and a request that I come with her into her den and write my notes or telegrams. Seated at the desk, I began to write, and Mrs. De Armond watched me with burning eyes. "You

understand the whole case, now, don't you? You see how the land lies."

I nodded, without looking up.

"Why don't you say something?" she burst out, peevishly. "Why do you sit there and write with that knowing air? You want to pretend now that you don't think your husband is insane. You are after the money. But you shall never have it. You want to pretend that when I told you he was a dying man, I meant worse, worse, *worse!*" Her voice mounted upon the repeated worse to a sort of whispered shriek. It was the outburst for which I had been looking.

I managed to answer, very quietly: "I am in your hands." And I added that I had not wished to come to the house nor did I desire to remain, and that I was merely submitting gracefully to what I could not help. Mrs. De Armond laughed at me for my pains, and unmasked her fear that I was ready to turn now, and fight her for the De Armond millions—sharing them with the man I had just married. She paid me the compliment of stating that she believed I had courage, audacity—was as brave as a man, and she offered me a bargain. We were to stand together till Wallace was in a mad-house—she admitted that was the plan; then she promised an even division. I attempted to accept this with an equal countenance, but in some manner betrayed my loyalty to my husband. Accused of it, I answered with crimson cheeks and downcast eyes.

The best plans ever made are not made at all. Thinking, reasoning, weighing, never decided such a course of action as will spring, ready-made, from the chaos of ruin, at the bidding of the brave soul's necessity. As I saw Mrs. De Armond advance upon me, muttering, glancing from side to side, the whole campaign which I must inaugurate flashed in full detail before my mind.

I summoned a calm manner. I told her I was a reporter on *The Planet*. I said I came with her driver

hoping to get a story out of it. I could see that my plain, practical tone staggered her. She halted, laid hold upon a chair-back, and panted, "What then?"

I controlled myself by a strong effort, and assured her, quietly, that when I failed to return to the office at the proper time I should certainly be traced to her house. I could see that she studied me now, in an agony of doubt. "If the doctor were here!" I heard her mutter. "I can't think. I don't know what to do. If he were only here!"

Her next move took matters out of my hands; but it was the one for which I had prayed. She pushed me into a chair before her desk, thrust a pen into my hand, placed a sheet of paper before me and cried, "Write—tell them you won't be there!"

Oh, then I fenced desperately for time, time to put upon that paper what I wanted there, as well as the words she directed, and was to see. I came near rendering her suspicious, or so angry that she would not let me send the note at all. But in the end I accomplished my purpose, and held up the note for her to look at.

To her eye it bore three lines of big, bold writing, an elaborate close and signature. She read it as she stood; and afterward I held it toward her for a further inspection. The looking-over was brief. She folded it, put it into an envelope, and bade me seal and address it to my editor. Her ring brought the frightened maid. I cannot deny that the coldest chill I had yet felt seized me when I saw the woman's eyes, red and swollen with weeping. She glanced from her mistress to me, and without a word held out her hand for the note.

"No, I will not give it to you," Mrs. De Armond said, sharply. "You know I don't like whimpering. How dare you, Benton? What do you mean by it—you sniffing fool? Get out of my sight! Send Barnes here."

The maid went, reluctantly. The footman came so immediately that one could see he was at hand. In-

deed, it was plain that, of the few servants who had been retained for this night's work, all were in the suite of rooms with ourselves—or, at least, on the same floor with us.

Mrs. De Armond's instructions to the man left me no doubt as to the delivery of my note. Whether Mr. Hardwicke, who was the only soul I knew in *The Planet* office, would be there to receive my message, or whether, receiving it, he would overlook its peculiar significance, I could not guess. But I had done my best; I had done the only thing that occurred to me under the circumstances; the rest was not now with me, but with heaven; and I asked Mrs. De Armond with a light heart if I might go back and talk once more with my husband.

With a carelessness which was ominous, she gave the desired permission. People are not afraid of those whom they justly suppose to be helpless in their hands. She looked me up and down with a jarring laugh.

"My stepson," she said, "has kept himself remarkably free from feminine entanglements. I have always suspected abysses of sentimentality in him, however; and now he seems about to justify my opinion. Considering the circumstances, I find your turtle-dove attitude one of the most humorous things I have ever encountered."

IV

WHEN I went back to my husband, he greeted me with a cry of delight.

"Another dreadful five minutes, and I should have gone searching for you, my poor darling," he said; "though, God knows, that might have been the worst possible thing for your safety."

There, in the long, brilliant drawing-room, strangely empty and forlorn under its myriad softly glowing lights, he told me the history of his childhood.

"What of your cousin?" I asked.

"Oh, he and I are good friends—he's a good fellow. If I could have got

word to him at any time he would have helped me out; but he and I have not been allowed to communicate. In the last five years, as the time of my absolute inheritance of the fortune drew near, Mrs. De Armond has brooded upon this matter till she has become insane. I think, sometimes, that great fortunes are absolutely poisonous in their effect upon weak human nature. The poison has worked upon Dr. Etheredge, sound and sane, a brilliant, successful man, as well as upon that poor woman. He sets her on to do what he is unwilling even to plan—but what he is willing to profit by. I used to love that man, Violet, my darling," and the bright, eloquent eyes dwelt upon me half-piteously, half-quizzically; "but I have been like a stray dog, ready to love anything or anybody that was kind to me, and that was permitted to be near me. To think that from such poverty of the heart, I am suddenly come into these great riches!" And his lips gently touched my brow, cheeks and lips. "He is a brilliant creature, a fascinating talker, Dr. Etheredge, and I—a boy of twenty-two—fell under the spell of his charm very, very easily. He commenced about four years ago to attempt to persuade me that I was mentally unsound, or threatened with mental trouble. It was when I began my free kindergarten buildings—dear, do you remember? They were much talked about by the papers."

"Oh, yes, indeed, I remember perfectly," I replied.

"Well, they were taking a good deal of money; my stepmother was pledged to them; and I think he feared to see the estate—of which he hoped eventually to possess himself—depleted. I told you he was a man of great charm; for two horrible years, dearest, I believed them—Dr. Etheredge and my stepmother. I could see no motive for so devilish a deceit. You see, Violet, love," fondling my hands, "I have been so painfully, so desperately alone; there has been no creature to whom I could turn. I have had a correspondent—a woman."

My heart leaped in my bosom. At last, at last it was coming!

"I don't know whether she was old or young; but her soul was kin to mine," my loyal Wallace declared, looking honestly into my eyes.

"She wrote me first while we were abroad, when I was planning to imitate the English plan of University extension. She is a writer. We have exchanged letters—at very long intervals—ever since; and I have been tempted more than once to write out for her a full statement of my personal complications. There was a strength about her, a buoyancy, a freedom that promised everything. She was like you, dearest. She was the only real friend my life had known."

While he told me this I turned away, struggling with tears that came afresh—tears that made me happy. For I had been his correspondent. I had written those letters he so loved and praised, and read his answers to them—boyish, sad, merry, brilliant, always adorably frank utterances of a fine soul—had read them sitting before that picture on my dresser. Ah, yes, I had been Wallace's correspondent these two years; not otherwise could I have gone forward with this strange adventure, but that the letters which came to me had always rung clear and true.

"I wish you had written me. I wish you had trusted so much to my love for you," I said.

"What!" he cried, softly, "you?" And then again laying my hand upon his own heart, "You—Violet? Oh, of course—who else could it be? my friend, my helper, my star; and, my darling—my very heart; she is but one; she cannot be divided. It was you," he murmured, again and again, "of course, it was you. Every detail of your face and presence is just as I have imagined it, love."

We were standing so, oblivious of all about us, when suddenly Mrs. De Armond's voice broke the quiet. She was white with fury.

"I have—I have something to say to you, Mrs. Wallace De Armond," she began, in shaking tones. "As a last

possible chance of making terms with me—with me!—will you come? Let Wallace retire with his nurse and—attendants. It is you I want. I have something to say to you."

I shook my head, nor left the clasp of my husband's arms. I merely turned and said: "I will not talk to you."

"You pitiful ninny!" she fairly hissed. "You vulgar spooney! Ogling and holding hands and kissing, when you might—but I am done with you."

"Mrs. De Armond," my husband began, "my wife and I will sign over to you such portion of the estate—we will sign over the entire estate; we are agreed upon this matter."

It was, perhaps, the most unfortunate thing he could have said—my poor, impractical Wallace! Mention of the estate, the broad hint that she was attempting to put him out of the way to get possession of it, the tacit statement, indeed, of the whole criminal situation—infuriated her past all bounds. The confirmation that he and I were united in feeling, in heart, as well as by the ceremony which she had just witnessed, came near to rendering all I had done fruitless. I saw it clearly, and time was what I thought best to fight for. In this great city of New York a mad-woman's plans against two sane people could hardly stand the wear and tear of twenty-four hours. I knew, as I perceived the disaster wrought by this speech of Wallace's, just how many a practical man feels when he is trying to help an adorable, a deeply-loved, high-minded, impulsive, impractical woman.

"Oh, the money!" raved Mrs. De Armond. "You pretend to think that I would do you an injury for the sake of the money. That girl there—whom my coachman picked up on the streets, Wallace; don't forget that small fact!—is ready to sell her soul for the estate; but she will want it all. I warn you, Wallace, you had better trust to me. That creature is a fiend"—and a flicker crossed her face, lighted her eyes, twitched her features—"and crazy!" (Ah, here it was again—the

mad cry, "The world is mad!") "I saw she was insane when I first looked at her to-night."

If I could have dealt with the woman alone I think I might have soothed her. My poor boy had fought these shadows so long that they were realities to him.

"We have had enough of this," he began, sternly. "I will hear no more of it. And I will ask you to remember, madam, that when you speak of this lady you are speaking of my wife."

Could anything have been more impossible? A war, with such an ally under my banners, appealed to me as something between tragic and ludicrous. I had a hysterical desire to laugh and weep at the same instant.

"Your wife!" sneered Mrs. De Armond. "The wife of a husband who will be in a lunatic asylum to-morrow; a girl picked up in the streets—a creature from the Lord knows where."

"A reporter from *The Planet* office, Mrs. De Armond," I put in, smoothly; and at the plain, practical tone, coming across their raised, excited voices, Mrs. De Armond looked at me with a sort of panic in her face.

"See," I said, going forward, putting myself between her and her stepson, "See, you have me to buy or to treat with, after all. I didn't come here for any purpose but to get a good story for my paper, as you know. The story I got would be fine reading; but I am a poor girl; you have the power all in your own hands. I think you must stop this family bickering, and talk sensibly to me." Glancing back over my shoulder, I caught sight of Wallace's shocked, hurt face, and I could have laughed in spite of the terrors surrounding us.

I looked at my watch; had there been time enough? Was my note at *The Planet* office? A little query, like a poisoned dart, pierced through my thoughts; was it lying there unopened? Another followed. Had it been opened by someone other than Mr. Hardwicke, to whom it would not have conveyed the message I had placed upon it? These queries stung and tortured me. I felt my nerves going; I wished, as

many a man has wished in my situation, that the one I so much loved was not present. I thought I could put up a better fight if I were alone with the woman.

I had opened my lips to say so—or, rather, to urge a private interview—when there came the sound of steps on the stair—not the measured, quiet tread of servants, but the heavy, hurried tramp of running feet!

We three stood as if turned to stone, and interrogated one another with terrible eyes. I suppose we were all equally afraid. That sound—it might mean the doctor with assistance for Mrs. De Armond. It might mean some chance interruption from the street, which would help neither side. It might mean—oh, kind heaven!—it might mean that my message had been read and fully understood in *The Planet* office!

Was it too soon for this to be the case? No, for *The Planet*, aristocrat among newspapers, is up-town, and it had been more than an hour since my note went.

Mrs. De Armond flew to the bell and pressed it. My heart leaped once, and seemed to stop beating. Wallace—poor, helpless darling!—very certain of a husband's duties, drew his arm about me, and whispered, "Be brave, dearest. I will take care of you. Nobody shall touch you till they have settled with me."

And on the instant the room was full of blue-coated policemen, a man whom I instinctively knew must be Mr. Hardwicke leading. Never did my kind appear so admirable! Never did mere human beings wear such an aspect of ministers of life, saviors of more than life. I could not see their blue coats and brass buttons, for the mist of tears that swam between!

The scene seemed to steady Mrs. De Armond, as though it froze her. Poor, demented soul, I fancy she must have imagined something like this as a possible end, when her mania first took its criminal bent.

"This is your doing," she said to me.

"It is," I answered; "but we do not

mean you any harm, Mrs. De Armond. We only refuse to submit dumbly to—to what you might think it necessary to your own plans to—to send upon us. We only want justice for all.”

She had drawn a small vial from the bosom of her dress, and now quickly dropped its contents into a tiny benedictine-glass on the table. “I drink to the health of the bride and bridegroom,” she said, easily. “There are people who do not know when the game is played out, who cannot see when they are beaten; but I am not one of them.”

I think no one of us had caught her sinister purpose; that none of us would have had the sense to stop her; but, as her hand went up, Mr. Hardwicke’s cool, steady fingers caught the wrist, with a murmured, “Excuse me,” his other hand covered the glass; and Mrs. De Armond collapsed, sobbing, half-fainting as they laid her down.

We knew, from the odor of bitter almonds that filled the room, what had been in that tiny glass. The poor thing, like Frederick the Great, had been carrying instant death around with her as a refuge, if her plans miscarried. Perhaps it would have been better to let her go; but human beings are not allowed to decide these matters.

Wallace hurried me out of the room into the hallway, where we found the maid and sent her to care for her mistress. We ourselves went back into the den, and Mr. Hardwicke sought us there, helpful, capable; quietly taking down the story between whiles, as I gave it to him—in what you may be sure was an abridged form.

“I was in terror lest you should overlook my message,” I said to him.

“It was luck—straight luck,” he returned, laughing. “I was just leaving the office as the note came in; the handwriting caught my eye first, and made me stop to tear it open; and once open, of course, I couldn’t miss your marginal reference. Miss Hetherington—” Wallace and I both flushed and smiled. “Oh, it is Mrs. De Armond already? You *were* married?

Well, I congratulate you heartily. Mrs. De Armond, allow me to say, that in a somewhat wide experience—for a fellow of my age—I have never met a piece of cleverness, of adroit management, an exhibition of pure courage, that so commanded my respect and admiration, as that small marginal reference.”

I had described to Wallace how I wrote that letter at Mrs. De Armond’s dictation. Now, he broke in, “A marginal reference! How could you, under those circumstances, put anything in your note that hinted at our situation?”

“I judge, from the state of things, that you must have got out that message to me under her very eyes,” Mr. Hardwicke commented.

“No,” I answered, smiling a little, “it was under something more than Mrs. De Armond’s eyes. Have you my note with you, Mr. Hardwicke? Oh, yes, thank you. Let me show it to my husband.” I unfolded the sheet, explaining to Wallace. He looked with puzzled eyes at the paper. Upon it was the message his step-mother had dictated, and my signature.

When he had looked from this to my face, in deep mystification, I called his attention to some minute hieroglyphics at the side. “Well,” he asked, “and what are those tiny quail tracks? They look as though a pencil had rubbed against the paper by mistake.”

Mr. Hardwicke laughed. “Those tiny quail tracks, Mr. De Armond, are the whole of the matter. That minute tracking says—at least, it says to me, and to your wife, or to anyone who uses the same stenographic system—‘Come quick to the De Armond mansion with ten policemen, and save a life. Big scoop for *Planet*.’ Those tiny characters, Mr. De Armond, are shorthand. But, remember, we don’t know yet how it was possible for you to put even that on your note,” said Mr. Hardwicke. “I am still wondering, and unable to conceive. How was it?”

“It was sheer desperation,” I an-

swered, "like all inspirations of the sort. I calculated about how much space I could have. I sat, with her watching me, and managed, by interrupting her dictation with some suggestions, which gave opportunity to change and work over the main note itself, to steal time to place these tiny lines so that they were concealed as I

held up the note for inspection. If she had taken it from my hand she would have instantly seen them. But all was so boldly done, the note so clearly legible where she sat, and so exactly what she conceived it should be, that the little life-saving message lay safe, unsuspected, under my thumb."



MATHEMATICS

QUOTH Cupid, "A puzzle I wish to propound,
The strangest one under the heavens;
When three persons stay where a pair are enough
The party's at sixes and sevens."



A TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPIRIT

GABRIEL—Won't that spirit play his harp?
ST. PETER—No; he says he wants some kind of a machine to do it for him.



GLAD OF IT

THE BENEDICK—Don't you bachelors get awfully lonesome at times?
THE BACHELOR—Yes, thank heaven, we do.



OUT WEST

MRS. WINDYCITY—I hear that Mrs. Packer is quite a collector. What is her fad?
MRS. LAKESIDE—Husbands.